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A RIDE IN EGYPT.

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A RIDE IN EGYPT

FROM SIOOT TO LUXOR IN 1879: WITH NOTES ON THE PRESENT STATE AND ANCIENT HISTORY OF THE NILE VALLEY, AND SOME ACCOUNT OF THE VARIOUS WAYS OF MAKING THE VOYAGE OUT AND HOME.

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BY

W. J. LOFTIE,

B.A., F.S.A., AUTHOR OF "IN AND OUT OF LONDON," "A PLEA FOR ART IN THE HOUSE," &c., &c.

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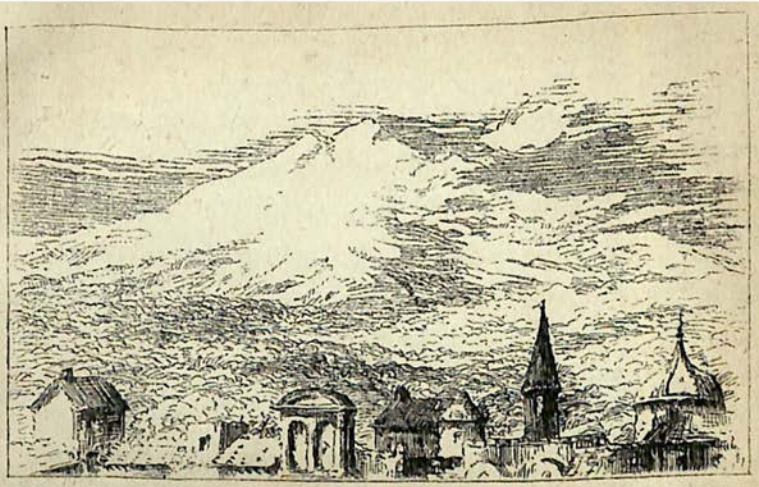


ETNA FROM CATANIA.

PREFACE.

In the following sketches an attempt is made to give some account of the present aspect of Egypt. They are the result of three visits to the Nile valley, comprising in all about fifteen months' residence.

It may be matter of surprise that another writer should venture to publish a book about Egypt. But I find two excuses both so good that the hesitation naturally felt at first thought is much diminished. The recent progress of events under the viceregal government, and especially the terrible famine of the past winter, have excited a new interest among English readers, who want to have

the latest particulars of the state of the country. And, moreover, while the history of Egypt seems to have been growing with such rapidity at the present day, that is, the latter end, the researches and discoveries of the past few years have added so much to our knowledge of the other, the further end, that books published even three years ago are already behind the times.

I have endeavoured as much as possible to avoid details which have already appeared in English books: and have confined my historical chapters as much as I could to the times of the Early Monarchy, that remote and mysterious kingdom, of which the date is unknown, but which is so vividly before us in the monuments left us of its architecture, portraiture, and literature. About Rameses and his dynasty I have said as little as possible consistently with my desire to give some account of This and Thebes. Of the later times, down to the present dynasty, I have said nothing. Indeed, I was minded when my book first began to take shape, to call it "Egypt, Ancient and Modern," for such a title would have clearly described its contents.

I have used as it was convenient the substance and sometimes the actual words of various articles

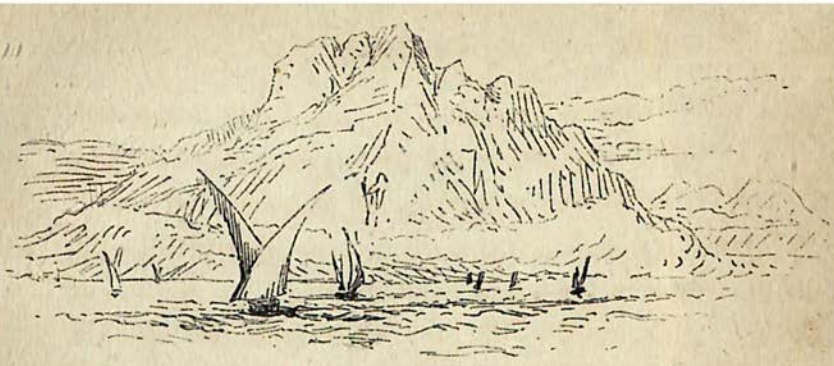
contributed during the past four years to the *Saturday Review* and other periodicals. I have to thank the editors for leave to use them, and have many acknowledgments to make to friends who have helped me with sketches, with information, and with criticism.

I am particularly indebted to Miss Evans and Mr. George Grahame the artists, to my American friends E. W. L. and Mrs. L., and to M. L. M. their comrade on the Nile voyage, for charming little bits of scenery. I have availed myself to the utmost of Mr. Roland Michell's stores of knowledge respecting the present condition of Egypt. From Mr. Greville Chester I have also received information of which he was in many cases the exclusive repository, but which was as ungrudgingly given as it is here gratefully acknowledged.

On my second voyage out I remained some weeks at Malta, and then made an abortive attempt to see Naples again, after an interval of nearly thirty years. I have thought it better to include my notes of these wanderings in the Mediterranean, as some parts of them at least will answer to the yearly experience of travellers who winter in Egypt.

Although since this book was written and, indeed, partly printed, the reign of Ismail Pasha has come to an end in the country he so terribly oppressed—I have not thought it necessary to alter any of the passages in which I refer to him and his acts. It is well to show to what a condition he had reduced his unhappy country as a justification of the extreme measures just taken against a prince for whom, not twenty months ago, the English press and English public had very little but praise. It is well, also, that we should remember, lest disappointment come upon us, that Mohammed Towfik Pasha is a Turk and his father's son: that what has happened may happen again: and that, above all, though I write it with regret and hesitation, an Anglo-French alliance where an unselfish and benevolent policy towards an oppressed people is what most of us desire to see, must end in failure.

W. J. L.



APE'S HILL.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

ON THE VOYAGE.

The P. and O.—The Bay—The Company—Gibraltar—An Orange Tree—The Sieges—The Signal Station—Approaching Malta—The Fear of Quarantine—What Quarantine is—Gozo and Malta from the Sea—Valetta—*Pratique*—The Government—The Palace—A Debate in Parliament—The Old Nobility—The Dome of Mosta—How not to get from Malta to Naples—A Night between Scylla and Charybdis . . . . . *Pages* 1—59

CHAPTER II.

THE PROPHET ON THE PLATFORM.

From Malta to Suez—Backsheesh—The Railway Station—The Dervish—A Testimony—Cairo—The Rule of the Turk—Palaces—Oppression—Difficulty of telling the Truth . . *Pages* 60—83

CHAPTER III.

THE FELLAH.

Heliopolis—The Delta—The Peasant Cultivator—Towfik Pasha—The Obelisk—The Inscription—Other Obelisks . . *Pages* 84—108

CHAPTER IV.

DERVISHES.

The Coptic and Muslim Calendars—The Egyptian Saints' Days—The Dervish is not a Monk—The Colours of Turbans—The Descendants of Mohammed—The Pilgrims' Return—The Mahmal—The Doseh. *Pages* 109—124

CHAPTER V.

THE BOOLAK MUSEUM.

The Peculiarity of the Collection—M. Mariette's Researches—The most Ancient Art in the World—Enumeration of the Chief Examples of the Early Period — Conclusions as to Life and Manners under the Ancient Kings—A Discourse of Scarabs. *Pages* 125—147

CHAPTER VI.

THE PYRAMIDS AND THE SPHINX.

How English Tourists see the Pyramids—The Great Time-passage Theory—The True History of Pyramids—A List of Pyramids from the Papyri—Their Identification—Pyramids now remaining —Their Comparative Heights—The Riddle of the Sphinx unsolved —The Question of the Tablet—Its Want of Authority—The Use of the Sphinx in Hieroglyphs — The Table of Thothmes — Description from Charlotte Brontë—An Irreverent Sightseer. *Pages* 148—169

CHAPTER VII.

BABYLON.

The Chains of Egypt—Nicopolis, the Roman Camp at Ramleh—Turkish Demolitions—El Kab—Dakkeh—Kasr e' Shemma—The Churches—The Walls—Comparison with the Walls of London. *Pages* 170—181

CHAPTER VIII.

EDUCATION IN EGYPT.

An Abortive Scheme—Government Schools—Missions—The University of the East—College Life in Cairo—Ordinary Schools in Cairo—In Country Villages—Blind Guides—Coptic Schools—Towfik's Schools for Girls . . . . . *Pages* 182—194

CHAPTER IX.

THE JOURNEY TO SIOOT.

The Steamer—Bedreshayn—A Difficulty—An English Beauty—An Egyptian Beauty—Corkscrews—The Children at the Stations—Maydoom—A Thirsty Journey—Beni Hassan . *Pages* 195—221

CHAPTER X.

SIOOT.

The Town—The Mountain—The Tombs—The Caravan Started—The Arabs—The Copts—Our First Camping Place . *Pages* 222—234

CHAPTER XI.

THE GREEK SHOP AT SOOHAG.

Tahta—Anteeka-hunting—A Disappointment—Luncheon—Benhow—Sunset—A Ride in the Dark—A Forced March—Dangers—The Scot Abroad—The Country Disturbed—Soohag—Another Disappointment . . . . . *Pages* 235—250

CHAPTER XII.

THE DONKEYS.

Importunate Beggars—St. Christopher—The Character of William Rufus—The other Donkeys—Arab Towns and Villages—Girgeh. *Pages* 251—263

CHAPTER XIII.

THE ANCIENT THIS.

An excited Antiquary—Egyptian Chronology—Arabat-el-Madfooneh—The Temples—The Sacred Windhover—Edfoo—The Table of Abydos—Casabianca—A Hill of Tombs—An Old Brick Fort. *Pages* 264—287

CHAPTER XIV.

THE TABLE OF ABOOD.

French Antiquaries—A long Delay—A Messenger—A long Walk—Rumours of the Famine . . . . . *Pages* 288—293

CHAPTER XV.

THE FAMINE.

The Morning Scene—A Starving Family—A Deserted Child—How—Shocking Sights in the Market-place—How to acquire an Estate—How to Buy and Sell Land—The Assessment of the Taxes—The Famine easily Prevented — Mr. Rivers Wilson — Semaineh — Marashteh—A Young Gentleman—A Deserted Village—A Dinner Party—Good Manners . . . . . *Pages* 294—307

CHAPTER XVI.

DENDERA.

The Desert—A Prize—Dendera—The Ferry—Camping Ground at Keneh—The Cook's Estate—The Inevitable Potentate.
Pages 308—320

CHAPTER XVII.

GYPT.

Keneh—Coptos—Copts—"Backsheesh Keteer"—The Ruins of Gypt —The Name of Egypt—A Lecture—Goos—Early to Bed—A Rembrandtesque Effect . . . . . *Pages* 321—329

CHAPTER XVIII.

AMEN.

Shenhoor—A Martyr's Grave—A Mirage—A Sandstorm—The View of Karnac—The Dedication of the Temple—Amen, Lord of Poont—Hymn to Amen-Ra—Karnac, a Christian Church—The Obelisks of Hatasoo—The Ride ended . . . *Pages* 330—342

CHAPTER XIX.

LUXOR.

Dwelling in Tents—Native Society—Poets—Music—An Arabian Night—The Remains of the 18th and 19th Dynasties—Bulls' Eyes—A Fright at Dinner—Hiring a Boat—Death at the Hotel—A Funeral—The Copt Church—The Cemetery . . . . *Pages* 343—354

CHAPTER XX.

FLOATING DOWN.

The Voyage to Sioot—The Famine District Again—Belianeh—A Hospitable Sheykh—A Concert—Sioot . . . *Pages* 355—362

APPENDIX . . . . . *Pages* 363—391

INDEX . . . . . *Pages* 393—399

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

	PAGE
THE OLDEST STATUES	*Frontispiece.*
ETNA FROM CATANIA	v
APE'S HILL	ix
CAPE ST. VINCENT	1
COAST OF ALGIERS	24
MOSTA	59
"BACKSHEESH!"	60
A WINDOW IN CAIRO	83
OBELISK IN CAIRO	84
FELLAH WOMEN	91

PAGE

CAVÉ ON THE MOKATTEM: THE "ROAD TO SUEZ" . . . 108

TOMBS OF THE SULTANS 109

MOSQUE OF SULTAN HASSAN 124

ENTRANCE OF THE GREAT PYRAMID 125

PAVILION OF A MOSQUE 147

DASHOOR 148

THE SPHYNX 169

THE LAST OF NICOPOLIS 170

ALEXANDRIA FROM RAMLEH 181

EL AZHAR 182

DASHOOR 194

ROCK-CUT TOMB AT BENI HASSAN 195

THE OLDEST PICTURE IN THE WORLD 209

THE CAUSEWAY 222

A FERRY BOAT 234

A STRAW BOAT 235

THE NILE AT SOOHAG 251

THREE LITTLE ARABS 288

"BASKING" 294

PAGE

THE PYRAMIDS FROM THE MOKATTEM 308

PYLON OF NECTANEBO 330

THEBES FROM KARNAC 342

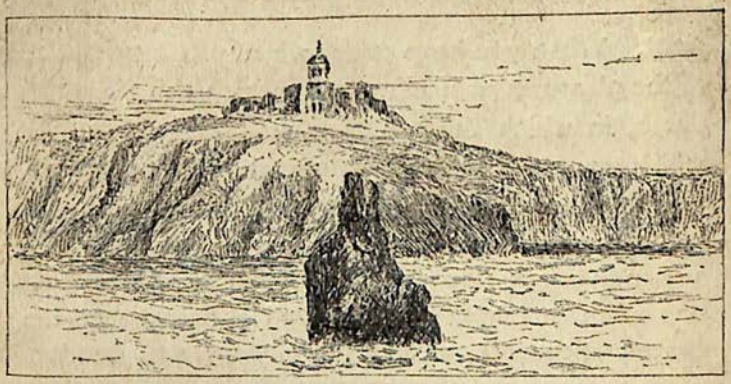
A NILE VILLAGE 343

THE REIS 354

TENT LIFE AT LUXOR 355

THE SHEYKH 361

ATHOR AT SILSILIS 362



CAPE ST. VINCENT.

A RIDE IN EGYPT.

CHAPTER I.

ON THE VOYAGE.

The P. and O.—The Bay—The Company—Gibraltar—An Orange Tree—The Sieges—The Signal Station—Approaching Malta—The Fear of Quarantine—What Quarantine is—Gozo and Malta from the Sea—Valetta—*Pratique*—The Government—The Palace—A Debate in Parliament—The Old Nobility—The Dome of Mosta—How not to get from Malta to Naples—A Night between Scylla and Charybdis.

IT is quite impossible to winter out of London—so one thinks rebelliously, when the doctor's doom has been pronounced. But there is no appeal—go you

must. When you have gone, when you have tasted of the pleasures of a climate in which the air is not damp, in which the sun is warm at Christmas, in which you are strong and happy, able to breathe and see, able to go about, to work and play, to learn and teach, to take long walks and join pic-nics, all at a season in which you would at home be confined to one room, artificially heated and lighted: even the charms of the village of St. Marylebone, near London, cease to prey upon your memory.

Another thing which mitigates the terror of wintering abroad is to find that people at home get on very well without you. There are of course two sides to this aspect of the subject. It is a little mortifying to observe that the charitable or the learned society which, as you thought, you were carrying on by your own strivings with recalcitrant committees, and which was prospering solely through your constant tact and management, prospers even more swimmingly when you are away. It is not altogether pleasant to hear when you are abroad that one who, &c., is able to enjoy an evening party or a run through the old Masters at the Grosvenor, just as well with that silly fellow Blank, who fortunately for him possesses the art of making her laugh, as she ever did with you. But after a time even these memories lose their poignancy, and you reflect, perhaps wisely, that to breathe her name you must retain the use of your lungs, and that rheumatism will give you worse beatings of the

heart than she can ever cause, be she never so beautiful or so cruel.

But apart from the question of health, I confess the prospect of spending four or five months in Egypt had no charms for me. True, I had read half a dozen books about that ancient land, and, like everybody else, had my own theory of the Exodus. I knew that some pre-Adamite kings had heaped up cairns at a place called Gheezeh, and that little boys in the streets of Cairo were but scantily clad, and had eyes full of flies. I was also acquainted with the use of the word *backsheesh*, and had so far progressed in Oriental languages that I knew it came, like *khedive*, from the Persian, and that both words were looked upon as disagreeable by people who love Egypt. Hieroglyphs, too, like all the things "which no fellow can understand," had a certain fascination for me, but I was not competent to distinguish between a determinative and a cartouche.

Under these circumstances, it was with no lively feelings that on a miserable morning in November, 1876, I commenced my first journey to Egypt—a journey repeated every winter since. I drove to Waterloo Station as the sun was going through what must be called, for want of a fitter term, sunrise. It only consisted, on this sad morning, in making more visible the dinginess of closed shop-fronts and deserted streets, followed by a rapid retirement as the regular midday darkness set in. I

loved the fog: would that it had loved me in return. What are the golden sands of Libya, or the crimson peaks of Cush, to one who knows the mud of Regent Street and the ruddy vapours of Hyde Park?

It does not take many hours to reach Southampton; and the journey, once we were in the open country, was not exactly unpleasant. I was rather curious to make my first acquaintance with actual life on board a great mail steamer.

The French say, with some truth, that Englishmen can express about half their ideas by the use of two words—namely, "fast" and "board." To be on board a fast mail steamer is an experience very common with Englishmen; but the actual feelings of those who travel in this way must vary in every case, not only according to a man's mind, but according to his stomach. To be lodged with some hundreds of people in a great floating hotel, cut off from all the disagreeable excitements of civilised life, the postman's knock, the afternoon visitor, the telegram —to be face to face with nature in one of its grandest aspects, as we are constantly reminded by the sentimental portion of our fellow-travellers—is to see life, it might be thought, under very favourable conditions.

But the reality is not so sweet. As we float down the Solent on a calm sea, a lovely view of the Isle of Wight in front, the sun setting behind the trees of the New Forest, and nothing to disturb the peaceful beauty of the scene but the long and hideous redness of Netley

Hospital and the sound of the dinner-bell, we are likely to anticipate more enjoyment than will really fall to our share. The first interruption to our dream of happiness is probably caused by seeing the visitors leave by the little Southampton steamer. Husbands parting from wives, parents from children, lovers from lovers, are an interesting sight, but one which we do not care to see twice. The comic aspects are so mixed up with the tragic, the kisses with the tears, that the indifferent looker-on is doubtful whether to laugh or cry. Here is a man coming on board in a state of semi-intoxication, not drunk enough to be happy, and evidently struggling with the imperfect recollection of some secret which he wishes to impart before he and his friend are finally separated; or a father and mother bidding their son farewell with the look of being heartily glad to get rid of a prodigal, and the young man weeping while even the mother's eyes are dry. There may be a trace of repentance in his face, and he has probably found life at home too pleasant to be willingly given up. A bride with floods of tears, a red nose, and redder eyes, parts from her sisters with frantic embraces, her husband looking on helplessly and but half pleased. But a great rush of steam, a groan and a fizzle combined, and we are off; the little steamer disappears in a cloud of waving handkerchiefs, and those of us who have suffered no bereavement are at leisure to observe with disappointment that the prettiest face has departed, and that the

ladies who remain have almost all the appearance of suffering from colds in the head. Such are my first impressions.

Presently I begin to take stock of my surroundings. The sleeping-cabin is very small for four. My large portmanteau can only be crushed under the sofa, and a surgical operation may be needful for its extraction. The washing appliances seem very deficient. The bed is very hard, and as narrow as a coffin. It suddenly dawns on my memory that a favourite cigar-case is at the bottom of the box under the bed, and my mind is disturbed by the thought that, of the companions of my cabin, one is sure to be sick, and at least one to snore.

Before rough water is reached the dinner-bell rings, and there is a contest, not altogether good-tempered, as to a seat near the captain. By degrees, however, settlements take place; those who cannot get near the captain endeavour to sit opposite a pretty face, or near the door, or where there is a chair, and so on, until everybody is satisfied, or at least, seated. But dinner is not a success. A pallor attacks my next neighbour's countenance. In the middle of my best anecdote he smiles at me vacantly for a moment, then hardly pausing to mutter an excuse, he rises, and disappears to return no more. One by one, about half the guests at table leave it before the conclusion of the banquet, and the survivor feels a sense of personal injury when ominous sounds, as of a human being in

distress, reach him from the neighbouring cabin. Perhaps his turn follows, perhaps he escapes; but, next to being ill yourself, it is worst to witness the sufferings of others, even if sympathy has no place among your moral qualities; and your first evening at sea closes in gloom. My own sufferings at sea have always been slight, but the motion of the ship causes qualms. For the first two days I have a feeling of being subjected to indignity as the rolling rudely shakes me from my seat, or takes my feet from under me. There is something humiliating in running down the deck and staggering up again as if you were very drunk indeed. Of this first voyage my chief recollection is that we had a gale in the Bay of Biscay. I had long wished to see the great waves of which I had heard so much, but it is a question whether it is worth going through a gale to see them. In other respects, for I must not attempt to describe great waves, one voyage is much like another.

As the days pass, and calmer latitudes are reached, the whole company of passengers meet again, and various phases of sea-going character present themselves. Some pace the deck in solitary meditation. Some seat themselves in a shady corner and observe what goes on around them with sleepy eyes. The ladies lie back on the chairs with which the quarter-deck is crowded, and make oft-repeated remarks on the sea and sky. A smoking-tent has been rigged up, and there the men assemble to talk as they take

tobacco, and give their opinions to the little world on things in general. It is there that the universal traveller holds forth, he who has surveyed the world from China to Peru, and who has apparently brought back only a knowledge of the iniquity of the British Government, the discomfort of foreign hotels, the loss of money by exchange, and the comparative venom of different breeds of mosquitoes. You ask him if he has been in Ceylon, or Norway, as the case may be, and he tells you of the price of wine at Colombo, or the bad tea they gave him at Christiana; or you ask him about the latest revolution among the South American States, and he replies with the remark that all Portuguese settlers are rascals, and proves it by an account of how a Spaniard cheated him about a horse. If you inquire as to the customs of the Dyaks of Borneo, he begins a series of criticisms on the steamboat arrangements of Rajah Brooke. To him travelling in itself is an end. He does not boast of the lands and cities he has "done," but talks as if doing them had been an unmitigated annoyance to him. He complains of the world because it is too easily exhausted, and laments that there are so few regions left to be traversed. He can tell you nothing about any place he has visited, except how to get there and how to get away again, and if you devote an evening to cross-examining him in the hope of obtaining some information, you are continually disappointed, and find in the end that you have lost the time you might

have much more profitably devoted to reading a geography book.

Beside him is a gentleman whose brogue, coupled with his irregular use of will and shall, betrays his origin, who informs you in five minutes of all the particulars you care to hear of his birth, parentage, and education, of his relationship to Lord So-and-so, and the name of his wife's first husband. He allows to having been born in Dublin, but vows he never set foot in it since. If in return you think to shame him by saying that you also are an Irishman, he only tries to startle you by confessing that he was convicted of Fenianism, and soothes you again by an interminable anecdote, told to show you that he was or is a man of property, and that in a hand-to-hand fight he can lick all before him. He knows every celebrated author in the three kingdoms, despises most of them, and wonders how any one can read their works, for he cannot. It is indeed soon evident that in the last particular he tells the truth. How far his other stories are to be believed you cannot easily decide.

On the whole, however, he is a more agreeable companion than the argumentative voyager, a man who always takes the other side, whatever may be your view, who invariably breaks down in the main point of his argument, and seldom fails to forget before he has done which was the side he originally undertook to support. Then there is

the serious traveller, who makes it a business to go abroad, who would not visit any country without an object, who sighs deeply as he tells you he has to get to Japan before the middle of January as it is his duty, evidently a painful one, to investigate the history and practice of Go Bang in its native country. You cannot play chess with him because he knows every gambit and opening, and tells you when you have made three moves that he must checkmate you in twenty-one or twenty-two more as the case may be. He has also made whist a special study, and informs you that when he lived in India he hired a pundit at so much a month to play double dummy with him.

This man of serious purpose, who takes his pleasure *moult tristement*, contrasts in my recollections with the young lady who travels for no earthly purpose or reason, who does not know whence she is coming or where she expects to go: who begins the *Last Days of Pompeii* on the first day of the voyage, and is well into the second chapter by the time she lands, under the impression that she will be able to get up the Bay of Naples from its pages, and so combine amusement with instruction. As a rule, however, she does not read much, nor, though she looks constantly at the sea, does she seem to see much. She admires the coast of Portugal, thinks Cintra very romantic, has never heard of the Convention, and forgets whether it is Madrid or Lisbon which lies at the mouth of the Tagus. On

the whole, unless that wistful gaze over the taffrail betokens a pre-occupation which betrays itself on calm days in excessive letter-writing, she affords entertaining company to the traveller, and his mind is not much wearied in any effort to direct the course of a conversation with her.

I have always found children on board a great resource, and am at times tempted in consequence to imagine myself very amiable. Perhaps I am, but they certainly amuse me better than their elders, and keep up a constant excitement in my mind, as I am always expecting one of them to fall overboard. Perhaps the young soldiers going to fight the battles of their country come next in interest. The children are scarcely so simple as the officers: for they lay little plots to capture a good-natured passenger, lie in ambush for him in the companion, ruin his repeater by constant striking, and break his back by making a horse of him from morning to night. The young heroes are less troublesome, but less pleasing. They smoke incessantly, perhaps in the vain hope of colouring their scanty moustaches. They talk of their regiment though they have never seen it, and are curious in boot-jacks and cigarettes. They go to their destination with a feeling that they may have to bleed in their country's cause, which helps to ennoble them. In moments of fancied seclusion—there is no real seclusion on board—a photograph book is brought

out from the recesses of a portmanteau, and when the boy's eyes are raised from his mother's or his sister's likeness they are full of tears. He need not feel ashamed of them though he wipes them away so fast. It is to such young Englishmen that England may have to look in time of need.

Such are the minor accessories of life on every voyage. I remember that on this voyage in particular, two brown gentlemen who had been aides-de-camp to the Prince of Wales during his Indian tour were returning home. One of them was a Mahommetan: the other a Hindoo. They used to play a good deal of chess, and were much admired for their personal beauty and gorgeous costumes. They studied a complete letter-writer with great assiduity, and brightened up very much when addressed in Hindostanee.

We had also opportunities for studying the natural history of the ship's stokers. They are indeed a strange race, much blacker than anybody can paint them—so black indeed that the coal-dust looks like pearl powder on their faces. They sit, when not at work, on the gratings near the funnel, and twang the light banjo or sew long seams in grey shirtings. There are many other blacks of various degrees of darkness and obscurity, physical or social, on board, and I was much startled in the grey dawn of the second morning to find one of them standing over my lowly pillow with a drawn razor in his hand.

He had been told, it seems, that I wanted a shave, and so I rose when I had sufficiently composed my countenance, and putting on a dressing-gown followed him to a big box near a porthole, where he set me up like a model, and standing afar off at each lurch of the vessel—for it was blowing a gale—made a lunge at me, after a very moderate exhibition of soap. Strange to say when my presence of mind returned sufficiently to enable me to refuse any further assaults of the kind, I found myself extremely well shaved and perfectly smooth, my features no more chiselled than when they were turned out originally by mother nature.

The noise on board is incessant. First, there is the throbbing of the engines. The beating of my own rheumatic heart is nothing to them. Then there are innumerable chains which are dragged through holes, the holes all seeming to be just under my pillow. Then at night there are uneasy spirits who seem to start from every wave, and walk the deck over our heads. In the early morning there is the deck swabbing and the holy-stoning. Finally the irony of fate is exemplified in the barrel-organ from Saffron Hill which a grinning Italian grinds all the evening. It seems as if the street music which has contributed so much to your nervous breakdown in London, had been specially commissioned by your ghostly or literary enemy to follow you to sea. But the organist is too sick to play for the first three

days, by which time the absence of postmen's knocks and railway whistles has so far braced your nerves that you can bear him with equanimity.

So passed the voyage. I omit the amazing anecdotes I heard, and the pleasant chats I had with acquaintances from the antipodes, the new world, the dear knows where, and many other out-of-the-way places. We rounded the ruddy cape of St. Vincent, which looks as if its rocks were stained with the blood of British seamen. We were shown afar off the blue and brown headland of Trafalgar—the last land which Nelson saw. And on the fourth morning we perceived, as the mist cleared away, on the right, the mysterious snow-clad mountains of Atlas; and on the left Tarifa, the first landing-place of the Moors in Spain, near the scene of Don Roderick's disappearance in the lost battle.

Already, as we turn into Gibraltar Bay, we are in a different climate. English ways, dresses, neatness, soldiers, and advertisements are all about us as we land; but the sky and the sea have a foreign look. Yet it is hard to realise the fact that we are really on a foreign soil. The rows of prickly pears, the aloes, a shovel-hatted priest or two, only remind us of the scenery of the Italian Opera. We pass through the gateway known from Charles V.'s cognisance over the arch as the Ragged Staff, and are at once in the town. Except for the brilliant daylight there is nothing very outlandish about it. Suddenly, in a shady lane of

the town, I glance up an archway, and immediately I feel the reality of the difference. There, growing twenty feet high in its native soil, with great green leaves and golden fruit and white blossoms, is a magnificent orange-tree.

The orange-tree behind the library at Gibraltar is, to my mind, whether in itself or its surroundings, one of the most beautiful objects I have ever seen.

It stands in a magnificent landscape. Towering up nearly perpendicular behind it are fourteen hundred feet of grey limestone, ragged and rough, but dazzling in the sunshine to Northern eyes. The sky-line is sharply defined by the white saw-teeth against the deep blue. Here and there a spot of dark green vegetation affords a scanty browsing place to half-a-dozen long-eared goats. Below, the purple waves dance and sparkle, white-sailed feluccas cross the bay, and the brown hills beyond look down upon Algeciras—the Green Islands of the Moors. The waters of the bay have swallowed all but one, now no longer green, but white with fortifications and bristling with guns, a standing menace to the English fortress opposite. Some ninety years ago the anxious eyes of Elliot and his little army were turned on the Spanish preparations for the famous siege; they had to watch in silence while their fiery trial was prepared for them before their faces. Nearer we may recognise the New Mole, on which, under Rooke, the seamen of Hicks and Jumper landed in 1704; the

Lines, which bore the attack of the Spanish fire-ships in 1780; the Old Mole, the Alameda, and all the little piers and landing places which together go to make up the port of Gibraltar. The red-tiled roofs, the white walls, the many-coloured shutters of the windows glow in the warm winter sunshine.

High up on the steep side of the bare rock, at the angle which may be said to form the pass from the mainland to the town, stands the Moorish castle, one of the few fragments of antiquity which the place contains. Where everything is in working repair, fortifications and barracks, batteries and churches alike, the ancient walls, zigzagging down the hill from the tall square tower above to the old port below, look strange and out of place, the sole surviving witnesses besides the rock itself of the days when Taric, the Persian freedman, led his Africans into Spain. Some part of the buildings may date from the time when the Moors colonised the barren slope, bringing with them, no doubt, the apes from Barbary and the orange-tree from the orchards of Andalusia. Their dominion lasted for seven centuries and a half where no Phœnician, Roman, or Goth had thought it worth while to build so much as a fort. It has been remarked that what one Roderick lost another regained. Roderick the Goth forfeited life and realm at the Guadalete in the eighth century, and Roderick of Arcos took Gibraltar in the fifteenth from Mohammed IX.

But, though Gibraltar may, strictly speaking, be reckoned among the possessions of the last Gothic King, there is no evidence that it had ever been inhabited before the coming of Taric ibn Zeyad. The apes have dwindled to the little flock preserved, like pheasants in England, by the keepers of the signal-station. The castle, where it is not in ruin, has been worked into the modern fortifications. But the "tree is living yet," and flourishes in many a hanging garden of the little city, to Northern eyes, at least, among the most beautiful of its adornments. The simple harmony of natural colouring may be studied to advantage among its well-laden branches, for the leaf offers exactly the scientifically correct contrast to the fruit. The brilliant tint of the orange is best set off by the dark green of the foliage. It seems like destroying the balance of a finely-painted picture to pluck a single orange. When the leaves were still young and pale, the fragrant white blossoms appeared. Next, as the foliage assumed a deeper hue, the light green fruit became visible. Then, as the leaves darkened, as more and more of the blue of the sky was absorbed, the yellow tone was transferred, until at length the full glory of both leaves and fruit was attained, and the cold harmony of spring became the ripe contrast of autumn.

Though the orange-tree may be the most beautiful thing in Gibraltar, there is no want of beauty and interest in the scenery, circumscribed as it is, of the

famous Rock. The English visitor expects to see a fortress. He finds a wild mountain, rich gardens, a busy city, a summer sea, cliffs which rival Shakspeare's, panoramas of folding hills, and a population formed of the most picturesque constituents the world affords. Dark-eyed Spanish ladies, with the graceful mantilla round their proud heads, contrast with the bustling English merchants' clerks. Soldiers in the scarlet uniform of England march briskly through the streets to the enlivening music of fife and drum. Here and there may be seen the white capote of the Arab lounging in a sunny corner, or the crimson burnouse, the turban, the yellow slippers of a people who, whatever they may have done in the eighth century, certainly never hurry themselves in the nineteenth. The seeker for antiquities may be disappointed. He will see the arms and badges of Charles V. over a gateway; may trace some ancient masonry in the old sea wall, now masked by a line of white limestone batteries, and may observe that the Old Church, hideously modern as it is, contains at one end some features of the Pointed style of the fifteenth century. He may remark over another gate the name of the Earl of Chatham. That was William Pitt's elder brother—the dilatory hero of the epigram—

> "The Earl of Chatham with sword drawn
> Stood waiting for Sir Richard Strachan;
> Sir Richard, longing to be at 'em,
> Stood waiting for the Earl of Chatham."

The castle, indeed, is there, with its rough yellow keep, its pointed arches, and the walls, with their six towers, descending like steps, which once protected the port. But even here he can find few features of sufficient importance to be worth a nearer inspection. He is driven to pass it by, wondering how much of its remains date from the Moorish conquest and how much from the time of Abdul Mumen, who in 1160 fortified the town.

The view from above the castle is fine, but it is well worth the walk to go up to the signal-station. By rising early before the sun has come over the Rock, we managed to have a cool pleasant walk. After passing the castle, which stands at the extreme northern end of the town, we went by roads cut in the rock, past a guard-house and a magazine of undoubtedly modern construction; and, after walking a few yards, found ourselves already high above the roofs and gardens. A short but steep ascent brought us to one of the highest points of the Rock. All along the path constant changes of view are afforded. Looking back, the Castle forms a foreground to the distant mountain, the first on Spanish territory, and locally known as the Queen of Spain's Chair. Beyond it, a little to the left, gleaming white on a hill, is San Roque, whither the Spanish inhabitants of Gibraltar removed when Sir George Rooke took their town. It was impossible not to hazard the guess that they called it after him as a

"sarcassum." Just below is the beautiful Alameda, and at one end the still more beautiful spot where the victims of the great siege were buried. Among the monuments and the cypresses stands, at the top of a flight of steps, the green bronze bust of Elliot. Perhaps this was the scene of a famous tragedy—

"When Elliot, called the Salamander,
Was stout Gibraltar's famed commander;
A soldier there went to a well
To fetch home water to his Nell:

"But fate decreed the youth to fall
A victim to a cannon-ball.
They straightway ran to tell his spouse:
She trembling heard, and fled the house.

"The husband slain, the water spilt,
Judge ye, fond females, what she felt!
She looked, she sighed, she melting spoke—
'Thank Heav'n! the pitcher is not broke!'"

Full in front is the bay, rolling its blue waves up to the foot of the rock. Beyond, on the western shore, is Algeciras, a more ancient town than Gibraltar; and not far from it, but invisible from the Rock, are the remains of a Roman station. The background is filled with mountains as far as the eye can see; those in front dotted with limestone in regular strata, those beyond marked here and there with a white village, here and there topped by a tower.

As the signal-station is reached, a still finer view is obtained. Looking due south along the axis of the

Rock, the height known as O'Hara's Folly, with its ruined tower standing on the sharp ridge of limestone, here bleached into marble whiteness, offers a strong contrast to the blue sea on either hand, the blue mountains across the Strait beyond, and the sky, bluer than all, above. I felt a thrill as I gazed into Africa, so to speak, over those mysterious mountains. They rise precipitously from the water, the highest being the ancient Abyla, the "Mountain of God," according to the Phœnicians. The Saracens called it after Musa, as they called Calpe after his lieutenant, Tarik; and the modern English soldier, outdoing even the Moor in his want of sentiment, has given it the familiar name of the Ape's Hill. Below, but hardly visible, is Ceuta, the Spanish convict settlement of which so shocking an account appeared recently in the English papers. The seven hills which gave it the ancient name Sebta, from which the modern Ceuta is corrupted, cannot be made out; but we could hardly help contrasting the horrors which go on, so to speak, under our very eyes across the Strait, with the orderly, if stern, rule of the "state of siege" in Gibraltar.

Turning to the eastward, we looked over a parapet fourteen hundred feet down into the Mediterranean. Steep as is the giddy height, it is still steeper a little further north, where a long sloping bank of loose sand extends almost from the very summit to the sea below, and cuts off the communication from north to south

upon that side. The coast-line eastward curves gradually towards Malaga and the snowy Sierra, ranges of mountains appearing and disappearing in the blue distance as the sunlight comes and goes. Just below the signal-station may be seen, nestling at the foot of the cliff, the summer residence of the Governor, where two summers ago the children were startled from their games by the apparition of a dozen tailless "monkeys" which the dry weather had driven from their fastnesses in the rocks above. North of the slope of sand is Catalan Bay, a colony it is said, of Genoese fishermen. They are cut off from all communication with the outer world, except by sea or when a dry season allows them to make a path along the shifting sands.

Bleak and rugged as is the view, the sunshine, the colouring, the glowing purple of sea and sky impart a beauty which enabled me to understand, if I had not done so before, why people talk as they do of the Mediterranean and its supremacy among inland seas. We turned reluctantly as the signalmen announced the approach of an ironclad from the West, or ran up the ball which tells of the coming of the mail from England. A distant bugle-call catches the ear, and we look down to the parade-ground, a thousand feet below, where we see the soldiers moving as on a chess-board, or watch the artillery practice from one of the forts at the water's edge. The ledge of earth on which the town stands is inter-

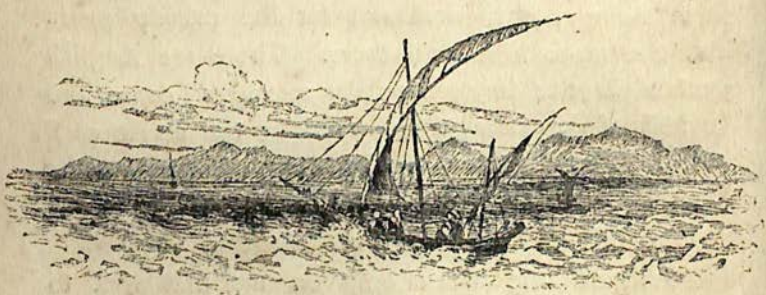
rupted by the public gardens, which include the parade-ground; high above them, but far below the station, a few villas are perched among stone-pines and vine-clad terraces, wherever there is standing-room for a house. The cultivation of the Rock contrasts strongly with the desolate bareness of the Spanish coast across the bay. The English energy which has held Gibraltar against such fearful odds has also made it into a garden. The roadway above the Alameda might have been transplanted bodily from Surrey, if it were not for the prickly pears and the aloes here and there. There are English yachts in the bay; English steamers come and go; English carriages drive along the street as if it were Piccadilly, and as the parade breaks up, the troops march to their barracks to the sound of "Obadiah" and "Tommy, make room."

I stayed one week only on my first visit to Gibraltar, and should have gladly stayed longer but that one of the dreaded "levanters" broke over the Rock, and the damp became unbearable. When a levanter blows, the rain comes down from the steep cliff in a cascade, and though carefully drained, the town becomes so damp in a few hours that you are in a steam bath.

The voyage to Malta commenced in the dark, and it was not till another year that I enjoyed the beautiful views of the African and Spanish coasts which are afforded from within the Straits in

daylight. We took our passage in the weekly Peninsula and Oriental steamer; and once out of the reach of the "levanter," spent a few very pleasant days. Then came a cloud.

The inexperienced traveller is sometimes puzzled by his fellow-voyagers' anxiety about *pratique*. He does not fully understand their dread of quarantine, and has no idea of the penalties incurred by a "foul bill." Yet these terms belong to usages which may



COAST OF ALGIERS.

cause him the greatest inconvenience, usages against which the best *viséd* passport and the warmest letters of introduction cannot protect him. Precautions against epidemics of a kind which may be described as superstitious and traditional rather than scientific or efficacious have been devised at every port, and the unfortunate tourist has no escape. Quarantine may mean for him the full forty days of abstinence from the joys of society or he may get off with a less

protracted period; but he who has once undergone even the shortest probation in a Lazaretto will ever after fear to incur it.

Now, Malta is a place full of interest for many different kinds of travellers. Soldiers may want to see the forts, artists to sketch the up and down stairs streets. The ordinary tourist even may have many things to see in the three little islands which form the group. He has read St. Paul and Josephus, and would visit the scene of the wreck of "a certain ship of Alexandria." He may have an interest in the history of orders of chivalry, and desire to examine St. Elmo, and fight over on the spot the famous siege of 1565. He has studied architecture, and would verify Mr. Fergusson's account of the wonderful dome of Mosta. If he is a botanist, he may propose to judge for himself as to the genus of a so-called Centaurea, about which Linneans are in doubt. The language of the natives has not yet been successfully reduced to writing. The statistical problems offered by the thickly-populated islets are but half worked out There are, in short, few places of the same size in Europe—for the Maltese reckon themselves Europeans—in which so many objects of interest, social, political, geological, geographical, or only picturesque, may be found; and the traveller easily makes up his mind to land, and, after seeing something of Valetta and its environs, to go on by the next steamer. He may be sorry to leave pleasant company on board, but

pleasant company may be encountered again, and there is but one Malta. There may be even a melancholy pleasure in persuading himself that bright eyes are a little dimmed as he announces his heroic intention. He is not altogether displeased to find that he will be missed, and his own sorrow is much mitigated by the regrets he hears expressed at the prospect of parting.

Should this, then, be your case, the accounts you hear of the quarantine and the danger of being trapped there are not pleasant. Before we sighted Gozo a discouraging rumour spread among the passengers. It was told at first as a profound secret; but many hours had not elapsed before everybody knew it. Small-pox was on board. A sailor had developed the disease in a mild form, and before it was recognised he was almost well. We all felt sorry, in a modified way, for the poor man, and wondered why he had not been properly vaccinated; but there we should probably have ceased to think of the matter, only for the look of our more experienced friends. They were not afraid of infection, but they were afraid of quarantine.

After much debate, a deputation waited on the captain to ascertain the truth. Every member of it wore the longest face possible as they emerged again from the deck cabin. A "clean bill" is hopeless at Malta: passengers landing will almost certainly be detained in quarantine: there is just a chance that, as the case

is of the slightest, and as the disease has not spread, *pratique* may be granted after a little delay: small-pox is not cholera, nor even measles. Such were the captain's words. But the chance is very slender, and those who proposed to land must make up their minds to the worst. They must prepare to undergo all the mystic and inconvenient ceremonial annexed to going ashore from an infected vessel. How many days, we inquired anxiously, will seclusion be enforced? The answer makes our hearts sink. Not more than twenty-one; yet we had not intended to stay more than seven. Three weeks in a quarantine hospital! the prospect is sufficient to appal the stoutest heart. Would it not be better to go on to the next port? The "case" will be landed. The quarantine at Alexandria or Suez will be shorter, if there is any. And then we shall not have to part quite so soon from our new friends.

There were several of us in this situation, and it was easy to see that the prospect of going on was not wholly disagreeable to a gentleman or two on one side and a lady or two on the other. Even with a mild and isolated case of small-pox on board, love-making went on briskly under the favouring rays of a full moon. Their minds, poor things, were evidently torn between contending emotions. Eventually they decided that it would be foolish to pack up with such a prospect: and so I believe their young hearts were not sundered till the ship reached Suez.

Meanwhile I confess to having had a great feeling of curiosity as to quarantine. The love of knowledge impelled me to seek the curious experience. I had never met anybody who had undergone it. I was not unwilling to see what it was like. Is there a prison—a kind of combination of the old sponging-house and a sanitarium? And where is it situated? Do the wild waves beat upon a sea-girt rock? or is it perched upon a lofty peak whence the islands may be surveyed at leisure, and twenty-one sunsets admired? Perhaps it would be as well, after all, to submit to fate. I might take the opportunity of mastering Mr. Browning's latest poem, or that charming treatise on prehistoric culture, or the wave theory in musical tone, which I have so long intended to study. One might write in the enforced solitude a work which will immortalise him. Another might, if there is a piano in quarantine, practise that difficult passage of Bach, and astonish his musical friends on his return. Another might paint a whole picture in three weeks and have it ready for the next Academy. Thus I reflected taking one side of the question first. But the other side was not to be neglected. Here were merry companions, a comfortable cabin, fine weather promising to hold out, a good ship, and, above all, no trouble of packing and disembarking only to pack up and embark again. I was still undecided as Malta came in sight, and I went on deck to see the view.

The three islands do not look very attractive from

the sea. Gozo is the most westerly; and after the blue haze has turned to brown, and the bare rocks and parched hills are clearly seen, there is little to make one wish to land upon it. There is a narrow green strait, over which something like a castle seems to keep guard, and then Comino gradually develops itself, a mere islet, and almost featureless. Beyond it is the so-called Bay of St. Paul. Malta itself is now alongside, and soon the white fortifications of Valetta begin to appear over the hill-top. In the valley is the dome of Mosta, looking very like a haystack from a distance. The shore is dotted with villas, and the mouth of the harbour has the appearance of a second-rate watering-place in England. Not a tree is in sight, and everything is either white oolite stone or brown sunburnt moor. Valetta itself is well situated on a peninsula of the limestone which divides the harbour into two parts. The town stands very high, and, as it faces north, looks higher and shadier than it is against the glowing southern sky. As the steamer enters two deep bays present themselves, and the three great forts, one on either side and one on the promontory between, look very impressive in their strength. The eastern harbour is the chief naval port; but the steamer, keeping to the right, enters the western, passing close to an island which lies within the harbour, and still bears its old Arabic designation of "Jezirah." Two buildings only are upon it. Fort

Manoel was built in 1726, and forms part of the system of defences, looking to seaward; the Lazaretto is behind the fort, and looks the other way—a long low building, at the sight of which, and the prospect of passing three weeks or a month within its dingy walls, my heart sank. Turning away, I caught sight of a yellow flag at the mast head of the steamer.

Those wise passengers who had decided not to land had a great advantage in the calmness with which they could look on. The scene was very unlike what would be presented by an English seaport. There was stir and bustle enough, but it did not wear the aspect of business. Numberless green boats, with prows like gondolas, are being rowed round the steamer at a short distance by sailors who stand and row forward. There are great black coal barges, orange boats, flower boats, pleasure boats, all putting off from the "Marsamuscetto Gate" at the foot of a steep street of steps. The rocky promontory on which Valetta stands is full in view, and you may observe that it is divided transversely by a deep ravine, down the sides of which are other long flights of steps, as well as to the water-side. Along the dorsal ridge, the axis of the peninsula, is the chief line of street, and all the others run parallel or at right angles; for Valetta is no ancient and irregular town, but was all built upon a settled plan after the repulse of the Turks from St. Elmo. La Valette laid the first stone in 1566, and in 1571 the city was

completed. From the water's level it still looks new, and this look is increased by the number of villas which on all sides fringe the shores of the Quarantine Harbour—Sliema, the principal suburb at that side, being just so near that you can see the carriages coming and going along the dusty road.

While the officer of health is coming we may glance at a local guide-book which gives us particulars of the quarantine regulations. Here are some pleasing extracts :—

"In regard to food, should the person not possess the means of ordering a breakfast and dinner at the high rate charged by the Trattoria connected with the Lazaretto, he stands a good chance of suffering from hunger." Nor does the cheerful prospect thus held out improve when we read on :—"As the *Guardiano* placed over you is not allowed to serve in any way (though you are obliged to pay him a salary, besides supplying him with food), one must almost necessarily hire a servant, who may charge as much as 2*s.* 3*d.* per day." Your ideas as to the pleasant leisure of a life in quarantine fade insensibly as you proceed. In case the traveller "wishes to hire furniture over and above that provided by the Government, consisting of a table, two chairs, and two bed-boards and trestles, he may do so from a person privileged for the purpose, who at a pretty high rate will supply him with anything he may require."

Such are some of the quarantine regulations in

what may be considered a civilised country. What must they be in Turkey or in Spain? Three weeks at Suez would probably make Jezirah seem a little paradise by contrast. For no fault of your own, unless it is a fault to travel, you may be imprisoned and very heavily fined, at the option of an official who probably does not know the difference between endemic and epidemic, or typhus and typhoid. Apart from actual experience you might suppose that, if a community like that of Malta thinks quarantine needful, it would at least take care that the unfortunate traveller who suffers for its sake should not suffer at the expense of his own pocket, since it is not for his own good. If he is not actually recompensed for his imprisonment, at least care will be taken that he has nothing to pay. But unless our *Guide* is strangely misinformed, he has to pay, and to pay heavily too, for the privilege of undergoing quarantine. His bill at a Brighton hotel in the height of the season would probably about equal that incurred at the Lazaretto on Jezirah. One might at least have expected that the custodian placed over him would be paid by the Government, that his rations would be supplied at cost price, and that a soldier from the Hospital Corps would be told off to wait on him. I do not go at all into the question of the efficacy of these or any other quarantine rules. If people who have the right to make such rules choose to do so, it is no concern of mine.

As we survey the unfortunate passengers who are obliged to land, we feel that the present working of those rules at Malta is needlessly severe, and indeed disgraceful to the executive of a British dependency. Here is a timid little governess without a friend; how is she to support three weeks' quarantine? She has been months scraping up her passage-money. In the words of the *Guide*, she stands a good chance of suffering from hunger. There is a second-class passenger with a wife and two children. He has made up a little purse to keep the family going till he gets work. It will suffice them for about a week. And of a different character, but deserving also of sympathy, are the other cases—the anxious wife, who descries her husband afar off in one of the boats, which still keep out of reach; or the midshipman about to join his ship; or the young tourist of rank who is going to stay a week with the Governor.

As we endeavour by condoling with these unfortunates to make the best of our own case, the officer of health appears. He is a pompous-looking man in uniform, and is rowed out from the gate under an awning. The anxious passengers augur well or ill from the expression of his face as he nears the steamer. The surgeon stands to meet him at the foot of the ladder and hands him the fatal bill. He receives it with a pair of tongs, at which there is a laugh and a cheer, and puts it into a box full of

holes, which he places over a little brazier to be fumigated. There are a few moments of intense anxiety as he pushes off and reads the paper at a safe distance. Some of the passengers endeavour to keep up the spirits of the others, but with slight success. The captain speaks hopefully of *pratique*, and his words are eagerly received and commented upon. At last the officer of health returns. He speaks for a minute with the surgeon, who mounts the ladder and speaks to the captain. The captain descends; five minutes pass. Some of the ladies are in tears; the men look pale. The captain suddenly comes up again with a smiling face. "You must all be fumigated," he says, "and then you can go ashore; he grants us pratique."

Thus happily ended a scare. There is enough to see at Malta to make a fortnight pass very rapidly.

Few countries have undergone so many changes of rulers. Phœnicians, Greeks, Carthaginians, Romans, Goths, and Arabs, all held it in turn before the close of the ninth century of our era. Since Roger the Norman in 1090 drove out the Moslems the series of Christian dynasties has included German emperors, Aragonese kings, French princes, and Spanish dons. History records few stranger transactions than that by which in 1350 the islanders freed themselves from the grasp of Don Gonsalvo Monroi, to whom they had been pledged by King Martin of Sicily for 30,000 florins; but not even by buying their own

freedom and taking themselves out of pawn did they secure independence; and when in 1530 the Knights of Rhodes were seeking a new habitation, Malta was given up to them by Charles V. at the peppercorn rent of a falcon to the King or the Viceroy of Sicily. For the first time in their existence, perhaps, the Maltese enjoyed the blessings of home rule under the sovereignty of the Grand Master, but we have no reason to suppose that they were satisfied with what was only a tyranny tempered by the Inquisition. Even Roger the Norman had respected the conscientious scruples of such Mohammedans as remained after his conquest; but the order of St. John enforced the strictest orthodoxy, and before the French expelled the Knights and the Inquisition with them, Malta had become what she is still, more completely Romish than Rome itself. Even the Grand Master fell completely under the terrible rule of the Dominicans, and a window is pointed out at a street corner close to St. John's Church, where executions took place, in sight of the crowd assembled in the adjacent square.

The French abolished the Inquisition as well as the Knights, but with that strangely short-sighted policy which has made them hated wherever they have come, in Egypt, in Syria, in Germany, as in Malta, they plundered the unhappy people and their churches to an incredible extent. I was shown curious old silver treasures at Citta Vecchia in the

cathedral, and heard wonderful stories of how they were preserved during the French occupation.

The English are not, however, very popular: but the example of the unhappy Corfuegians may well be held up to the Maltese. The Ionian islanders were constantly petitioning to be given up to Greece. Now that they have attained their wish, and the prosperity which Englishmen and money brought to the island have disappeared together, they lament their hard case, and abuse us for our selfishness in turning them off.

It will be the same with the Maltese if we ever, during the reign of some future Gladstone, take it into our heads to hand the island over to Italy. There is, I believe, an Italian party in Malta. Their objects are about as definite as those of Home Rulers in our own Parliament.

The experiment, first tried in 1849, of calling together a local legislative body, would be more interesting from a political point of view if free discussion involved equal freedom in decision. But the members of the Government are always ranged on one side and the elected members of the Assembly on the other, and the Government, having a majority of votes, can always carry its measures. It may be questioned whether the existence of a permanent Opposition is to be attributed to the impotence of the local vote, or whether it is not rather to be accounted for by the religious and social condition

of the native electors. When education has reached the lowest classes we may hope for clearer political views among them; meanwhile it is curious to notice that, though all educated Maltese talk Italian, many French, and most English, yet not one of these languages is the vernacular. A dialect of Arabic—till within the last few years unwritten and unstudied—prevails among the whole population, and is preferred for conversation by the members of every private family. Thus far, indeed, its existence has been ignored by the successive rulers of Malta; but not the less it exists, and the traveller on his way homeward from the East is surprised to find himself understood when he uses words picked up in the bazaars of Cairo or Damascus.

The debates of the local Parliament are carried on, however, either in Italian or English; and the stranger present at a sitting has often the gratification of hearing Southern eloquence in his own Northern tongue, and of listening to English spoken with a grammatical correctness and a distinctness of utterance which he might miss in the House of Commons at home. Some members of the Council, however, refuse to speak in English; it is not easy to see on what grounds, for English is not more foreign to the native Arabic than Italian. In the judicial tribunals and the schools Italian only is employed; but difficulties constantly occur, and many other questions turn upon this one of language. In

education particularly, the necessity, hitherto deemed insuperable, of teaching Italian rather than Maltese has had a retarding effect on the growth of the young idea. With the help of great natural abilities, many of the islanders have succeeded in obtaining prominent places in politics, commerce, and the arts; but it is confessed by all Maltese of enlightenment that the bulk of the population is sunk in a condition of almost hopeless ignorance. It might have been supposed that, with Arabic for a foundation, and with Italian and English as early acquisitions, the young Maltese would have been turned to account in our administration of more distant and more purely Oriental countries; but I never heard that a single native of these islands has entered the Civil Service in India, although scores, perhaps hundreds, are interpreters in English consulates and mercantile offices throughout the Levant, and every second courier or dragoman is a Maltese.

The "Council of Government," as it is called, assembles daily between November and June, in the Governor's palace at Valetta. It is composed of eighteen members, of whom ten are appointed by the Crown, being the holders of such offices as that of Crown Advocate, Collector of Customs, or Treasurer, and including the Governor himself, who is thus at once Sovereign, Speaker, and Prime Minister. All the Government offices are open to natives, except those of Chief Secretary and of Auditor; and of the

nine members of the Council now sitting on the official side, only two others besides the general commanding are English. On the opposite side all the elected members are natives. They include one Roman Catholic priest, two ecclesiastics only being allowed to sit at the same time, together with three lawyers, and several members of the old Maltese nobility.

I attended a sitting of this miniature Parliament. It is held in the palace, a building situated on the brow of the noble peninsula which Valetta crowns. Built in 1571 by Peter del Monte, Grand Master, it contains, like so many houses in the same city, a series of fine apartments, designed rather for coolness in summer than comfort in winter. They are decorated in the "rococo" fashion, which prevailed after the first blush of the Renascence had passed away, and before classical architecture was affected. Two fine, but hardly picturesque, courtyards are surrounded by a series of corridors and galleries which contain not only pictures and portraits of Grand Masters and other potentates, but a magnificent collection of ancient arms and armour, in many respects almost worthy to rival that in the Tower of London, and comprising nearly a hundred suits of complete mail. From the corner of the principal court a magnificent marble staircase of ingenious design, winding at an easy slope, conducts the stranger to one of these galleries. Half way up,

in a recess, his feelings of awe at the august presence of viceroyalty are quickened by the sight of the books in which visitors to "their Excellencies" record their names. At the top he finds himself at once near a tall mahogany door, where an imposing official, accompanied by soldiers, messengers, and the other attendants appropriate to a Court, gives him admission after certain formalities and a caution as to breaking silence. The Council sits in the Tapestry Hall, a chamber some sixty feet long and, perhaps, not less than thirty-five in height. The walls bear the Gobelin hangings which give a name to the chamber. They are of good design and in brilliant preservation, though a hundred and fifty years have passed since they left the loom. The eye seeks in vain for signs of the English domination. The roof is supported by cross beams carved and gilt, as well as the panels between; but the patterns employed are without political significance. Above the tapestry and below the cornice there is a zone filled with emblems more or less warlike—shields, cuirasses, and trophies of arms—but they allude only to the extinct glories of the order of St. John, and are completed at the further end of the room, where we should look for the Queen's arms, by a vast crucifix, standing out with startling distinctness just above the throne of the Governor. Even the carpet, where one might expect Axminster or Glasgow, is apparently contemporary with the tapestry, and

bears the golden *fleur de lis* of old France. The most English feature in the room is a set of desks for the deputies, of new varnished yellow oak, which must at some not very remote period have left their native Tottenham Court Road.

On the right of the spectator sit the Ministers. On the left—that is, on the Governor's right—are the elected members. The Governor himself is supported behind by two gentlemen in gorgeous uniforms, and fortified in front by two secretaries. He is in plain clothes, but wears the diamond star of some exalted order on his breast. Dignified as is his position, nevertheless he is not to be envied. He is set on high to be spoken against, like Naboth the Jezreelite; and it almost made my hair stand on end to hear the whole character of the Government, including its august head, called in question in a torrent of warm eloquence. The orator sat on the Opposition side. His appearance was foreign, but his English was excellent, and neither the heat of passion nor the alien tongue disguised the rich tones of his Southern voice. As he proceeded, the subject under discussion was gradually unfolded. The old question of language was at the bottom of it. Somebody had made a deposition in a Maltese court of law. The case had gone on appeal to the Home Government, and the deposition had been translated by an official whom the speaker did not hesitate to denounce as having given certain sentences or certain words

a turn such as materially to alter their meaning. I was carried away in spite of myself while he spoke. His manner was as good as his voice. An air of injured innocence was followed by an outburst of generous indignation, and that again by an appeal to the eternal principles of right and justice. Only a person accustomed to such a power of words could see that the honourable gentleman had no case; and that all these flowers of rhetoric and refinements of action were only employed to cover the nakedness of the argument.

It was with feelings by no means favourable to my own countrymen that I saw a member of the Government rise to reply. His voice was somewhat low. The words did not come rapidly. There was a total absence of gesticulation. But in an instant the whole edifice of the previous speech toppled over, as it were, and disappeared. After all, I could not but reflect, English common sense is better than any amount of southern eloquence. The speaker had evidently the judicial faculty born in him, as in all Englishmen, and was not to be disturbed from his English centre by the most fervid declamation to be found in Malta. As I went out I felt satisfied that it is well these people should be ruled by an English majority, and with a laudable patriotic pride I asked of the doorkeeper the name of the Minister.

"That," he replied, "is a Maltese gentleman from

a village at the other side of the island. He is called Sir Adrian Dingli."

The old Maltese families are rather proud of their titles of nobility, and at the time of the Prince of Wales's visit there was some offence given because they were not duly recognised at the Vice-regal Court. Since then a Commission was appointed to go into the claims, and the Blue-Book which was issued gives some strange particulars on a subject which interested me very much during my stay.

There are marquises, counts, and barons in the Commissioners' list, but they are all to rank among themselves according to the seniority of their titles; and Madame Damico, "Baronessa di Diar el Bniet e di Bucana," whose barony dates from 1350, will rank before Dr. Delicata, to whom the Commissioners have confirmed the title of Marquis of Ghain Kajet, conferred by the Grand Master de Rohan in 1796.

The task before the Commissioners was one of great difficulty, and their report is not altogether satisfactory from an English point of view. The "titolati," to use the Commissioners' phrase, who reside in Malta, consist of three distinct classes. There are some whose titles were conferred by ancient kings before the Order of St. John assumed the sovereignty of the islands. There are some whose titles were conferred by the Grand Masters, who appear in the eighteenth century, after they had been nearly two hundred years at Valetta, to have suddenly

discovered that they were able to make grants of nobility to their subjects. Lastly, there are titles granted by foreign potentates to Maltese subjects, and recognised by the Grand Masters. Besides these three classes, which are easily defined, the Commissioners notice a number of titles "conferred by foreign authorities, but never recognised in Malta." Following this list, again, we have one of "claims referred to the decision of Her Majesty's Secretary of State for the Colonies."

Among the questions thus submitted were some of extraordinary complication and difficulty. For example:—the Commissioners allowed the claim of Amadeo Preziosi to a county conferred by Victor Amadeus, King of Sicily and Duke of Savoy, in 1718; and they reported to the Secretary of State that the said Amadeo was the senior male representative of the original grantee, and therefore undoubtedly a count; but the further questions arise, whether Count Amadeo alone of all his family is entitled to that distinction, whether it does not extend to all the first Count's descendants, whether it is limited to his male descendants, and whether male descendants of females are included. There were nine gentlemen of the house of Preziosi who thus claimed to be called counts; but, if the right extended to descendants of daughters, the number of Counts Preziosi would be fifty-nine. It is not to be wondered at if Lord Carnarvon refused to adjudicate

upon such a question, and the case was referred back to the Commissioners for a further report. In their reply they came to the following conclusion, which so well illustrates the nature of their inquiries that I quote it entire:—"This title, originally granted to Giuseppe Preziosi and to his male descendants, is claimed not only by Amadeo Preziosi, the first-born son in the grantee's primogenial line, but also by four other gentlemen who contend that it may be enjoyed by all the grantee's contemporary male descendants, whether descending from the male or female lines. We beg respectfully to refer to our remarks on the claim to the title of Marchese conferred by the said King Victor Amadeus, in 1717, on Mario Testaferrata. It will be seen that the grant by Victor Amadeus to Mario Testaferrata was made under the law respecting titles of the Sicilian nobility, and that it is consequently descendable to the first-born son only, according to the order of succession prescribed by the *jus feudale francorum*. Applying these remarks to the present case, it is obvious that the title of Conte granted to Giuseppe Preziosi cannot be enjoyed but by Amadeo Preziosi, whose name has been included in our list of titolati in our former report, and that the other gentlemen who have asserted a right to this title have not succeeded in making out their claims." The secretary may well ask, after this second report, why it could not have been made at first; but we can understand

that, after the settlement of the Testaferrata case referred to in the second report, the Commissioners may have felt themselves exhausted. In this case a marquisate was claimed by twenty-four gentlemen simultaneously, and indirectly by some ninety others; but the decision is adverse, not only to twenty-three of the claimants, but to the whole two dozen. The reasons on which the decision is founded cover twelve pages of the report, and in the end the Commissioners come to the conclusion that the title is "inheritable only by the first born," and that the possession rests with one or other of two claimants, who will, it is presumed, have to go to law and try the question formally before the courts. The Commissioners came to a similar conclusion in another case, in which a marquisate conferred by Philip V. of Spain was claimed by one of the Testaferrata claimants, and by two other gentlemen of the same family. Here the title was never registered in Malta, but it was expressly recognised by one of the Grand Masters. One of the claimants asserted that the eldest branch of the family was disinherited by the original grantee, and one might have supposed the Commission quite capable of deciding how far such an act of disinheritance would be valid in the case of an hereditary title. The Testaferrata family, indeed, may justly complain that they have much litigation laid up for them for many days, but at least they are better off than some of their neighbours. The existence of

two marquisates in the family is acknowledged; but in the cases of the Azzopardi, who claimed to be barons of Buleben, of Signor Gatt, who claimed to be Count of Beberrua, and of a gentleman who, as honorary secretary of the Committee of Maltese nobles by whose action the whole question has been opened, signed himself "Marquis," the Commissioners decided that the claims were not made out.

There were, in all, twenty-four titles acknowledged, held by twenty-one "titolati"; and, in addition, four titles were recognised as existing, but disputed between two or more claimants. The list does not tally either with that of the Committee of Nobles or with that of the Marquis Crispo-Barbaro, published in 1870; but it must be allowed, even by those who have lost titles which they fancied to be their own, that the result of the Commissioners' Report will be to place the position of a Maltese noble on a footing of security very satisfactory to the families concerned, and calculated to give the titolati of the island a place in European society denied to the doubtful marquises and counts of France or Italy.

The Commissioners seem, in one case at least, to have been too easily satisfied, and in another to have required proof nowhere possible; but, on the whole, little fault can be found with the Report, except in the points indicated above. A Maltese *Peerage* will doubtless soon appear; and we may hail among the nobles of our realms such picturesque names as those

of the Baron of Ghariescem and Tabia, the Count of Ghain Toffieha, and the Marquis of Gnien Is Sultan. Even the ancient marquisate of Carabas pales before the name of Serafino Ciantar, Count Wzzini-Paleologo, and Baron of St. John.

It is true a majority of the titles are of very modern origin, but it will not become Englishmen to sneer at Maltese nobles on this account. So many members of our own peerage date their honours since the dethronement of the Knights in 1798, that they can scarcely afford to despise a series of titles the first of which was conferred in 1350, even though the last was only granted in 1796.

It is not very clear what advantage the Maltese nobles hope to gain by this Government recognition of their existence. In the time of the Grand Masters even a marquis was as the dust of the earth before the lowest of the knights. They will now, if any special precedence be granted to them among their fellow-subjects, be in a better position than that they occupied while under the rule of the Order; but, so far as we are aware, no warrant, royal or other, has been issued assigning to them any place or privilege at the Vice-regal Court. Her Majesty, whose dignity as a great Asiatic sovereign has been frequently noticed in the past few years, appears in a character new to many of her subjects, and we may perhaps before long witness the creation of counts and marquises by a sovereign of Malta whose power is at

least as great as that of any of the military monks her predecessors.

The Dome of Mosta, a village some four miles from Valetta, was an object I wished very much to see. The history of the church has often been told. The villagers, finding their place of worship too small for the requirements of an increasing population, determined some fifty years ago to build another. The priest and village mason seem to have been enterprising people. They resolved that the new church must be built, but that the old one could not be removed until another was ready. The site of the two churches must be the same. These apparently inconsistent propositions were ingeniously reconciled. The new church was built over the old one, and as soon as it was ready the old church was carted out, so rapidly that not even a single Sunday's service was omitted. The dome was built without scaffolding within; yet it is one of the largest in Christendom. Here is a list of the principal domes of the world, and the importance of Mosta may be seen from it in an instant:—

The Pantheon at Rome is only 146 feet high, but the interior diameter is 142 feet.

St. Peter's is 333 feet in height, and the interior diameter is 137 feet.

St. Maria, Florence, height 275, interior diameter 137 feet.

St. Paul's, London, height 220, diameter 108 feet.

Santa Sophia, Constantinople, height 182, diameter 107 feet.

The dome of Mosta is not less than 200 feet in exterior height, 160 feet in interior height, and 124 feet in diameter, so that it is 16 feet wider than St. Paul's.

With these may be compared the dimensions of the dome of the Gol Gumuz, at Beejapore. I had the particulars from an Indian civil servant who was on board the steamer in which I came out, and as they are not generally known, I give them here in full. The interior is 124 feet in diameter, and 175 in height. It therefore ranks, like Mosta, between St. Peter's and St. Paul's. The exterior height is 198 feet. The dome covers the tomb of Mohammed Shah, the sixth king of the Moslem dynasty in Beejapore, who died in 1689, so that the building is nearly contemporary with St. Paul's. The name signifies the "Rose Dome." The king is buried under it with the simple inscription, "Sultan Mohammed, a dweller in Paradise."

Internally the extreme plainness of the Mosta dome greatly increases its appearance of size. It is perfectly smooth, and if the exterior was as simple the building would be much more satisfactory. But it is disfigured by a number of large coarse honeysuckle scrolls, calculated to dwarf it to the utmost, and the Ionic or quasi-Ionic capitals which support the portico are in a style too debased to be even picturesque.

The village is small and miserable, but built, like the dome, of the beautiful yellow stone of which the whole island consists. The drive from Valetta seems to be all made through streets or between walls, and the mud is something wonderful in its putty-like and clinging character.

I did not expect much from Mosta, and so was not disappointed. The interior was certainly above my expectations: while the ugliness of the exterior was all the more apparent because Malta abounds in handsome domes, and that of Mosta is only one of thirteen I counted all in view together from a single hill above Sliema.

All I saw besides in Malta, except a silver-covered MS. of the eleventh century in the Cathedral at Città Vecchia, the old town locally called Rabbat, are they not fully described in various guide-books? I will therefore refrain from further details of my visit, and proceed at once to an unfortunate attempt I made with a friend to reach Naples, there to pick up the French steamer for Alexandria. The difficulties of so direct a voyage are strange between two such civilised parts of the world, and still more strange is it that English mails are suffered to pass through the hands of people with no stricter ideas of punctuality than the Italians. A recent writer in the *Times* complains, not unjustly, of the irregularity of the Maltese postal arrangements, and repeats the story, universally accepted at Valetta, that the mail boat

only leaves port when a naked candle will burn on the forecastle. While unhappy people are anxiously watching for letters, the Italian steamer lies safely in Syracuse or Messina, and to all remonstrances the Company only replies that the subsidy is too small to cover risks. We have an insular idea that a mail steamer must keep time. Nothing more foreign to the Italian view of things can be conceived. Unfortunately, too, while the sailors who convey the mails to and from Reggio are charged with so much care of themselves and their boat, they bestow no such care on their precious freight, and there is always a feeling of doubt as to letters, not so much whether they will reach their destination a week or a month after their time, as whether they will get there at all. During the recent rumours of wars the officers of the army and navy at Malta were left for ten days at a time without letters from home, in a state of the most unpleasant suspense. These irregularities and others of a similar character add an air of adventure to the voyage from Malta to Naples which the tourist in delicate health may prefer to dispense with; and nothing but a hope of seeing the glories of Etna, of visiting sites with the historical interest of Syracuse, Taormina, and Messina, should tempt an unwary Englishman, except in the finest weather, to run the gauntlet between Scylla and Charybdis in an Italian steamer.

Fair laughed the afternoon over the great harbour

of Valetta as I descended to the water's edge and took a boat to the steamer. The yellow freestone of which the city is built rising in terrace above terrace contrasts brilliantly with the intense blue-green of the sea. At the mouth of the harbour a slight surf dashes on the rocks at either side, and the spray as it rises into the air is whiter than snow. Though there is a calm below, the flag at the masthead floats on the breeze, and I had been told that if it does not hang down perpendicularly the packet will not start. Nevertheless it does start, not more than an hour or so after the advertised time, and I had ample opportunities of admiring the old Borgo or Vittoriosa, which was the seat of the Knights' government till 1571; of seeing the evening gun fired from St. Angelo; and of amusing myself by British sneers at the affectionate kisses two grimy Italians bestowed on each other as the bell gave fallacious warning of departure.

At last, while a sunset glory in the sky turned the domes on the height from yellow to purple, the steamer got out of the harbour and the first plunge was over. Already I had proof that the boat was badly trimmed, badly steered, and manned by a gibbering crew of gesticulating natives, who did the least amount possible of work with the largest amount of noise. The wind freshened, and an experienced sailor would have suggested the use of a small fore and aft sail to steady her. But a

fellow-passenger to whom I made the remark shook his head. There is not, he said, a sailor on board who would go aloft in such a breeze. Meanwhile the company considerably thinned, and two passengers, or three at the most, sat down to dine in a saloon so handsomely decorated that one saw at once that the boat was not new, a suspicion confirmed by the subsequent discovery of a date some twenty years old, together with the name of a firm of shipbuilders long forgotten on the Clyde. I turned in early, as, though it seemed tolerably smooth after the Bay of Biscay or the Dover Channel, the ship had an awkward way of veering to avoid a wave, and ducking every one who had been so foolish as to remain on deck. Taking a farewell look at the hospitable shores of Malta, now represented by a long dark line, decorated at frequent intervals with brilliant lights, I descended. A hideous noise on the deck above, a few hours later, continued at intervals throughout the night, announced the arrival of the packet at Syracuse, and marked the various stages of opening the hold, raising the cargo, swinging it, and lowering it into a barge alongside; the whole performance carried on to a running accompaniment of the choicest nautical Italian.

I rose with the sun, and reach the deck in time for a glorious view. The harbour appears to have no exit, for the town occupies a kind of promontory between it and the sea. This was the scene of the

famous battle of the ships described by Thucydides. There the Syracusans drew their chain of boats across the harbour mouth. From that shore the unhappy Athenians watched the destruction of their hopes. I sought in vain through the misty air of the morning for some vestiges of the quarries where the Greek prisoners perished by slow degrees, but there, as if floating in the sky, thousands of feet above the town and the bay, I saw a great white cone dimly visible through the grey morning air, its summit just touched by the golden light. You must be hard to please indeed, if you grumble because no smoke proceeds from the crater; but Etna long showed that he was still awake by an occasional puff, and on this occasion I was fortunate to see him at all. By degrees as the steamer neared Catania the base came into sight, a little darker in colour than the blue sky on either side of it. The steamer waits at Catania till evening, and we had time for sight-seeing; but the best sight is the nearer view of Etna which may be obtained from the public gardens, and there, while a band plays, the afternoon passes away pleasantly. Before many hours of the evening are gone, we have sailed under the cliffs of Taormina, identified Mount Hybla with its slopes covered by dark olives, and watched the melting snow as it gives off great white clouds, until, when night falls, we enter the Straits of Messina and see the lights of Reggio on the right.

And now our troubles began. The next morning was cold and cloudy. The town did not look inviting, yet we had to land, as the Company will not give one breakfast on board. If you insist on some refreshment, you have to pay double for it. By an ingenious arrangement, which must save thousands whenever the weather is rough, you are only fed if the ship is actually in motion. Forty-eight hours were to be spent at Messina before a boat would be ready to take us on to Naples, unless we were willing to go on board a coasting steamer. This we agreed to do, as Messina affords few attractions, though we did go ashore and visit a cathedral which exhibits some traces of the architecture of Roger the Norman, chiefly exemplified in a long series of granite columns taken from a Roman basilica. You may visit a picture gallery in the half-deserted University, and try to discern the hand of the great Antonello under the neglect and dirt of ages, but on the whole, it is more pleasant to stay on board. We tried in vain to remember that the immortal Dogberry was "as pretty a piece of flesh as any in Messina," and, "which is more, a householder." The town did not interest us. From the deck we could at least look at the mountains, now partially obscured by the clouds of the impending storm that, hushed in comparative repose, expected us as its evening prey. The harbour, with its semi-circular, sickle-shaped, natural breakwater may give the geologist food for

speculation as to the probability of its having been—long before Etna rose from out the azure main—the crater of a volcano; a probability increased by the great depth of the soundings close to shore. The historian also may amuse himself by recalling the various scenes in which Messina has played a part, since the Mamertine brigands here commenced the first Punic war, and down to the days when the brave Essex admiral, George Walton, wrote his famous despatch to Byng from Messina:—"Sir, we have taken and destroyed all the Spanish ships and vessels which were upon the coast—number as per margin."

But as the afternoon waned, the wind rose. A little way out to the north we could descry Scylla, the waves breaking angrily at its foot. We watched with misgiving as an Italian wine schooner was caught by the current of Charybdis, and hardly succeeded in making the mouth of the harbour. At length, after several false alarms, we were off; first, across the strait to Reggio, for it seems to be a rule with every steamer leaving Messina to make a preliminary trial-trip so far. Then back again to Messina—nobody knows why. By this time it was dark and stormy, and the rain drove us below. We felt sure we should never care to see Messina again, and were decidedly of opinion that the beauties of the Straits were overrated. Once more we felt the whirling tides of Charybdis, and as our

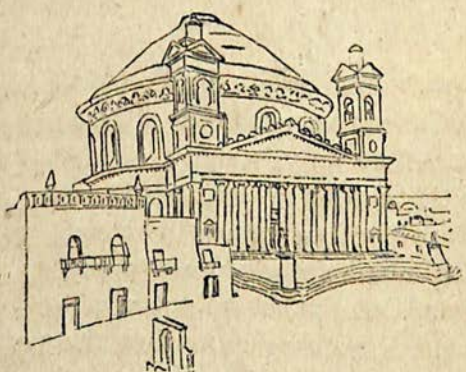
fellow-travellers dropped off one by one and shouted in vain for help from stewards who were themselves powerless with fright, and would not cross the deck to save our lives, we retired to the lowest and narrowest berths we ever tried to sleep in. I thought involuntarily of Schiller's *Diver*. Was he not Cola of Catania, and was it not Frederick II. of Sicily who made him plunge into these very waters? Listen how the waves wash over the deck, or rush along the side, a thin board only between us and perhaps

Der entsetzliche Hai, des Meeres Hyäne,

or the nameless horror with the hundred arms. Such happy visions mingled with my broken slumbers, and it was well nothing else was broken, for with every roll of the vessel my nose came in contact with the roof of the berth, and if I dreamed at first that I shared the terrors of the Diver, I ended by thinking myself nailed down in a coffin.

As the night went by, in spite of these miseries and a thousand others, I comforted myself with the thought that I should be in Naples next day. There was no sound of anchoring in a port by the way. Evidently the violence of the gale had driven the captain to go forward at once; and, as calmer sea is reached, we thankfully fancied ourselves in the lee of Capri, and turned in our cribs for a last attempt at sleep. When I wakened it was to hear the rain pattering on the deck above. No other sound broke

the stillness. We must be at Naples. Even through a shower I must hasten to have a look at the famous Bay. Hurrying on the few clothes taken off the previous night, I made my way to the staircase and emerged. It is scarcely daylight, but there can be no mistake as to where the steamer lies. There is the familiar fort; there is the lazzaretto; there is the cemetery; beyond, through the wind and the rain, across the rough sea outside, is Reggio. We are back in Messina, and it is all for nothing that we have spent the night between Scylla and Charybdis.



MOSTA.

"BACKSHEESH!"

CHAPTER II.

THE PROPHET ON THE PLATFORM.

From Malta to Suez—Backsheesh—The Railway Station—The Dervish—A Testimony—Cairo—The rule of the Turk—Palaces—Oppression—Difficulty of telling the Truth.

THE voyage from Malta by Port Said through the canal to Suez is very uneventful as a rule, but very pleasant. The only scenery is the ever-changing view of the turquoise sea, tinted with a depth of colour elsewhere I am sure unknown. Port Said I have often heard described as "a beastly hole," and I think the description only too mild. The canal is a long ditch, nothing more, but the lakes are not so unpleasant, except for a want of vegetation on their margins, as I had expected. The clearness of the deep green water in Lake Timsah I have never seen equalled. Still there is nothing especially oriental in the scenery, and the traveller is well into

Egypt before he knows it. The usages, the civilisation, the steam and the iron of the West, are still before his eyes until he finds himself at Suez.

When he lands all things are changed at once. The East and the West meet indeed, but their meeting is like the meeting of fire and water. They do not coalesce. The railway, the consuls, the post-office, the hotel, have not made the slightest mark upon Suez. It is an oriental city, narrow, sunny, odoriferous, though the engine whistles and the church-bell rings in its streets. On this account it is peculiarly interesting to the observant stranger. He sees for the first time the contact of the old world with the new. The contrast between the two is put before him in its most startling aspect. Hitherto there has been little except the blue sky and the sunset to remind him that he is no longer in Europe, and the first view of Suez is from a distance. The harbour is some miles from the town, a glorious bay—or rather, as it is called on the maps, a gulf—with fine mountains on both sides, and the entrance to the canal, where an endless procession of noble ships goes up and down—great floating barracks on their way to and from India, mail steamers, long and low, tall black colliers, now and then a vessel full of pilgrims for Mecca, with a Scottish name on the bow and stern—but they do not bring Europe to Africa. The constant traffic leaves Suez as it was, and English eyes miss there, as much as in Cairo or Constantinople, the flourishing appearance

which would be worn by a seaport of equal importance at home.

There is a railway from the harbour to the hotel; but the carriages have had no new paint or upholstery since they first left their maker's hands at Manchester. The trains run—or rather the train runs, for there is evidently but one set of carriages—on a simple system; as soon as they are nearly full the whistle sounds a note of interrogation; the note is repeated at intervals, and eventually, after one or two false starts, the train goes on at a leisurely pace. When it has proceeded about half way an official gets in and endeavours to sell some tickets; but no one buys, and those passengers who can talk Arabic taunt him for trying to make them pay. Such a thing was never heard of. Are they not in Government employ as well as himself? He looks incredulous at first, then crestfallen, and as the jokes increase in number and brilliancy, to judge by the laughter, he retires to the footboard outside. Presently the train comes to a standstill. There is a railing on one side and the sea on the other, all enveloped in a blaze of blinding sunshine. The traveller steps out on a dusty platform, repels a host of donkey-boys, and rushes to hide in the cool darkness of the hotel.

When he ventures to sally forth again he obtains, without going far, a very complete idea of an Egyptian town. He finds a heap of mud hovels, here and there a stunted minaret striped like a zebra, an awful smell

everywhere, a few yellow dogs covered with mange, and sitting along a shady wall a row of native women, each in a single garment of dark blue cotton, her brown face partly hidden by a fold which she draws across as you pass, holding it in her teeth. They crouch in the dust like barn-door fowl, and, as the stranger walks by, each extends towards him an attenuated baby covered with black flies, and feebly, almost mechanically, cries "Backsheesh." When I heard that magic word I realised for the first time that I was at length in the East, the land of romance, the scenery of the *Arabian Nights*, the glorious country of the rising sun, which poets have sung and artists have painted; where religion and civilisation, and all things rare and beautiful and costly, have had their birth; of which I had thought and dreamed, wondered and read, talked and even written, till, all my gorgeous imaginings about to be fulfilled, I had made the pilgrimage at last and set foot in Egypt: "Backsheesh!"

The next morning when the mosquitoes had closed my eyelids, but not in slumber, and when my experience of the *salle à manger* had made me sceptical of holy writ and quenched my desires for the flesh-pots of Egypt, I found my way to the station; for, after all, there is a station of which the railing is only an offshoot. As we went through the sharp morning air—for, though the thermometer deceptively points to something like fifty-five, we felt quite chilly—threading some passages among the

mud hovels, and seeing more filthy infants and more brown mothers; through a wide market-place, in the midst of which a negro was droning out ballads, and crowds of half-clothed men, women, and children were performing a morning toilet, which consisted chiefly in examining their garments for fleas, we reached at last the platform by which the train stood. Facing the train was a kind of shed running the whole length of the platform. A crowd of loungers stood or sat in rows under the shadow. There was another crowd of disappointed donkey-boys, orange-girls, dragomans, Arabs in white shirts and brown capotes, dandies with white turbans, embroidered dressing-gowns, red stained nails, and yellow slippers, all walking up and down as if seeking something. Round the door of the ticket-office were a few men in uniform, apparently Custom-house officers or railway guards. Each of them wore a red fez, a long coat, and a shepherd's plaid. The scene, as we discovered later, is the same at every railway station in Egypt. Here perhaps the great bay, the rugged pink mountains, the mighty steamers making for the mouth of the canal, divert your attention from things nearer the eye; but wherever you go afterwards you find that the despatch of a train is a great public occasion at which all the inhabitants must assist, and that between whiles a majority think it necessary to sit motionless in the shadow of the ticket-office, watched by an official in a red fez and a

shepherd's plaid. If you go to Egypt asking why is this? or why is that? you will get no reply; you will be thought mad, and you will weary yourself. It is better to take Dante's line to heart and merely record passing impressions. But while one sentimentalises, perhaps, watching the strange medley of men and manners from the carriage window, or observing the incongruity of a puffing steam-engine with the sandy desert, the domed mosques, the lofty palms, and the solemn camels, there is a sudden motion of the crowd. It divides, and an open path is made along the platform. Is it some great pasha, or a kicking horse, or a funeral? But we forget for a moment that we are in the east. It is a dervish.

First came a lofty standard, about as high again as regimental colours, but otherwise very like them. It was borne by a tall mild-looking negro, who was also laden with a gourd, a brass pannikin, a pipe, and various other articles for personal use. While we wonder what or who he is, he stops, and a kind of ring is formed by the crowd. Into the open space steps the dervish.

He is undersized, like most great men; but his mien is majestic. His complexion is quite white, of which one can easily judge, for he wears no clothes to speak of, except that round his naked shoulders and chest is coiled a heavy chain, supplemented by half-a-dozen rings of solid iron. His hair, black and curly, hangs half-way down his

back, but rises nobly from his magnificent forehead. His beard, like John the Baptist's, has evidently never been touched by a razor, but flows, well combed, over his heaving breast. He stops, looks down, then up to heaven. There is a shudder among the silent crowd. Then he casts up his arms and begins to speak in a deep, solemn voice, and in measured phrases which to our unlearned ears sound like verse. As he waves his arms, it is apparent that he has but one hand. The other has offended him, and he has cut it off; but he raises the stump to heaven in protest against the men of this generation; and we think we see one of the old Hebrew prophets as he speaks, and a thrill runs through us also. The scene is deeply impressive. The crowd reply to his eloquence by a groan, and then he takes a step or two forward. His gait is perhaps too much of a strut to satisfy a critical eye, and there is an expression of cunning in his face which mars his otherwise magnificent features.

At the moment we did not perceive this. He walked up and down, gesticulating, but with dignity. As he strode along he seemed to perceive no one in his path, and all made way for him. We hoped he would not walk into our carriage. An official duly decorated with the shepherd's plaid came out to him, but approached him respectfully. He endeavoured to reason with him, to draw him aside, to expostulate. Evidently he would be more

at home in a neighbouring mosque. His costume was not suitable to a railway station. There were Europeans in the train, perhaps ladies. But no, the prophet cared for none of these things. He turned round and lifted up the voice of his testimony against that official, and, so to speak, withered him up. He retired discomfited; but another came out, greater than himself. The gymnosophist is at last persuaded. He turns, shakes the dust of the platform from his unshod soles, and passed out of the gate. There is a moment of stillness, and then the bustle breaks out again till the train starts.

After such a scene we thought we could understand the fanaticism of the East. We saw how the dervish could carry with him the sympathies of the crowd. His word seemed to sway them as a wind sways the grass. He was a man who had suffered for his mission. He was not clothed in soft raiment. He had mutilated his body. He was naked and maimed. And though we understood not a word he said, yet we could not but perceive in the well-adjusted balance of his sentences and the full pronunciation of every syllable that the speaker was an educated, perhaps a learned, man. Had he commanded those superstitious Mussulmans to kill every Frank in the train, would they not have obeyed? Had he ordered them to pull down the ticket-office and tear up the rails and break in pieces the locomotive, can there be any doubt it would have been done in an instant?

Fortunately he was merciful, though he was so powerful; and as the station was left behind, and we were safe out in the desert, and could see again the red mountains, and the great ships entering and leaving the Canal, we breathed a sigh of relief. The prophet had not hurt a hair of our heads. The voice of his testimony had rolled off our backs. But one day, we felt sure, his cry would be heard further. The fanatics might rise at his bidding. The hordes which swept away the civilisation, such as it was, of the seventh century might attack it again in the nineteenth. What will they care for Mr. Rivers Wilson, or the Daira debt, or the Canal shares? Once the fire has been lighted, will not hundreds of prophets like this one come forth out of their hermitages, out of the holes and caves of the earth, and preach defiance from the Ganges to the Nile?

So I reflected, still under the spell of the full-toned voice and the strange weird look of the prophet on the platform. As the train drew to a station I took the opportunity of asking the guard what it was he had said. After his answer I wished I had refrained. The dervish, he told me, had demanded a free passage by rail to the next village, and the station-master had refused it. That was all.

Such was my first experience of Egypt, and it afforded me food for reflection during the rest of a very hot, dusty, and disagreeable journey. Soon we left the desert, stopping a few minutes at Ismailia,

and then entering the Delta by the land of Goshen, were at Cairo shortly after dark, and put up at one of the best inns to be found in Europe, Asia, or Africa—the Hotel du Nil.

Although Cairo is, strictly speaking, in Africa, it is the most typically and intensely Asiatic city in the world. Except, perhaps, at Damascus, there is no other place in which the character of the Mahometan races can be so well studied. The natives all over Egypt call themselves not Egyptians but Arabs, except the Copts. They talk only Arabic, and are of the religion of the Arabian prophet. It would not, as we shall have many occasions to remark further on, be easy to tell what is the true source of their race. The Copts, indeed, are easily distinguishable from the ordinary "Arabs" by their superior appearance. But they may be taken to represent the ancient governing classes, those who compelled the construction of the great monuments, and whose features are found in the statues of the mighty monarchs of thirty and forty centuries ago. The lower ranks are Mahometans, and possibly many of them are Arabs; but they are a down-trodden race, the servants of servants, the toilers, and cannot differ very much from the people of whom Herodotus says, truly or falsely, that a hundred thousand of them at a time were forced by Cheops to build his pyramid. But Masr el Kahira, "the victorious city," is altogether Arab. The Roman fortress, erected to overawe

Memphis, and still known as Babylon, is tolerably perfect;[1] but it lies some miles south of Cairo, and was not even included in the early Arab town, Fostat, now called Old Cairo. As Egypt was one of the first conquests of Mahomet's disciples, one of the earliest seats of the great Caliphs, and long the centre of Arab civilisation, it has more features of purely Arab type than Constantinople, or indeed any other Oriental city of its size either in Asia, or Africa. The traveller, therefore, who desires to see the Mahometan at home cannot do better than seek him in Cairo, and he finds in the narrow, picturesque streets of the old parts of the town scenes of interest which he may seek in vain elsewhere. When he emerges into the modern quarters the change is remarkable. Though all the tyranny of the Turks has not sufficed to alter the indelible characteristics of the place, and though the wide squares, the fountains, the gardens, the arcades, the watered roads, the rows of villas have a half-French look, the people who crowd every thoroughfare are as unlike anything European as they can be. Here, a long string of groaning camels led by a Bedouin in a white capote, carries loads of green clover or long faggots of sugar-cane. There, half-a-dozen blue-gowned women squat idly in the middle of the roadway. A brown-skinned boy walks about with no clothing on his long, lean limbs, or a lady smothered in voluminous draperies rides by on a

[1] See page 171.

donkey, her face covered with a transparent white veil, and her knees nearly as high as her chin. A bullock-cart with small wheels, which creak horribly at every turn, goes past with its cargo of treacle-jars. Hundreds of donkey boys lie in wait for a fare, myriads of half-clothed children play lazily in the gutters, turbaned Arabs smoke long pipes and converse energetically at the corners, and every now and then a pair of running footmen, in white shirts and wide short trousers, shout to clear the way for a carriage in which, behind half-drawn blinds, some fine lady of the Viceregal harem takes the air. She is accompanied, perhaps, by a little boy in European dress, and by a governess or nurse whose bonnet and French costume contrast strangely with the veiled figure opposite. A still greater contrast is offered by the appearance of the women who stand by as the carriage passes, whose babies are carried astride on the shoulder, or sometimes in the basket so carefully balanced upon the head. The baskets hardly differ from those depicted on the walls of the ancient tombs, and probably the baby, entirely naked and its eyes full of black flies, is much like what its ancestors were in the days of Moses.

In the older quarters of the town the scenes are much the same, only that there is not so much room for observing them, for the streets are seldom wider than Paternoster Row, and the traveller who stops to look about him is roughly jostled by Hindbad the

porter, with his heavy bale of carpets, or the uncle of Aladdin, with his basket of copper lamps, or the water-carrier clanking his brazen cups, with an immense skin slung round his stooping shoulders.

It is now (1879) more than two years since I wrote these first impressions of the streets of Cairo home to a literary journal. Since then I have resided for four months together in the heart of the town at one time, and then at another; and though my first surprise at the strange sights I saw has worn off, and the Moosky is as familiar to me as Regent Street, I am more than ever convinced that I was correct in saying that those sanguine people who believe in the possibility of reformation and improvement under Turkish rule should visit Egypt. We are so often told of the enlightened policy of the Khèdive, that some of us, especially those who only look at Cairo through the windows of a comfortable hotel, are inclined to think that nothing but the incorrigible stupidity of the people prevents their improvement. But a little inquiry soon demonstrates the truth.

Two years ago the viceroy was still popular in England. It was impossible to get at the ear of the public about him. In spite of the fact that he is so completely a Turk that in his own family and court he speaks Turkish, a language as foreign to Arabic as it is to English, I was constantly told that he was not a Turk, and that he had identified himself completely with the country he rules. As to what constitutes a

Turk by descent I cannot say. It would require the genius of Swift to unravel his pedigree. But as to his identifying himself with Egypt, it is a kind of identification similar with that by which the cat may be said to be identified with the mouse she has swallowed. His development of Egypt has ended in reducing her to a state of poverty unknown elsewhere. No doubt he has had money to spend, and equally, without doubt, he has had money to hoard; and has laid up his wealth where neither moth nor rust corrupts, and where no Turk may embezzle—perhaps in Paris or London; but of the vast sums which have passed through his hands it is perfectly safe to say not one single Arab peasant on the Nile has been in any way the better.

Some years ago an apology for the Khedive and his family was published in London, and to their endless shame be it spoken, most of the London papers reviewed it favourably, although in full possession of the real facts. The apologist, among other things, asserted the conjugal purity of several members of the family, which read strangely where crowds of black eunuchs, and carriages full of half-veiled ladies, were well-recognised sights. If Prince —— has only one wife, which is very possible, how many concubines has he? Why did his grandmother make him a present of three Circassian slaves on his birthday? What on earth can his one wife want with two housefuls of attendants who rival or surpass herself in beauty?

About the works of such apologists it would be possible to write any number of similar questions. I would ask them two: Is it true that black slaves are imported now with only as much disguise as deceives people who wish to be deceived? Is it true that the Khedive's chief eunuch—for nobody can deny that he has a chief eunuch and hundreds of others—keeps an establishment for the production and education of these ornaments of the hareem?

All round about Cairo there are vast lath and plaster buildings, chiefly standing in wide gardens and surrounded by high walls; if you ask what they are, the answer is always the same—palaces of the Khedive. Three years ago it was reported that his Highness had thirty-three palaces, and he still went on building. A few days ago a friend of mine and I counted twenty on our fingers. A magnificent but flimsy villa, surrounded by a large park, has just been furnished at Gheezeh, in sight of the Pyramids. Another is in process of completion on the opposite side of the road. There is a long, low house, round three sides of a square, in the heart of the city. There is a long red wall made of hoarding painted to imitate brickwork, facing the island of Roda. There is a splendid but tawdry plasterwork palace at Gezireh, on the west bank opposite Boolak. There is a half-built "hotel" in the French style near Old Cairo. There is a vast series of irregular halls and rooms of state in the citadel. In fact, everywhere you turn

there is some such house building, or built, or abandoned and closed; and every one is a "palace of the Khedive." It is the same as you ascend the river, until it becomes one of the standing jokes of the Nile voyage wherever a house, or gardens, or white walls appear, to ask, "Is that a palace of the Khedive?" And in nine cases out of ten the answer is in the affirmative, while in the tenth case it is that the building in question belongs to one of the Khedive's sons, or sons-in-law, or stepmothers, or cast-off concubines. The money that has been spent on them would have built the pyramids of Gheezeh, yet in any climate but Egypt they would not stand a single winter. They are all made of the same durable materials, namely, lath and plaster. Yet I heard lately that a single staircase in one of them cost 20,000*l.*, and that the Khedive took a dislike to it as soon as it was finished, and so it was pulled down and another built at a similar cost.

When we arrived from the upper Nile in a dahabeeah we anchored our boat near the road to the Pyramids, and remained in her for some days. Every morning when we looked out of our windows early we saw a long and melancholy procession on the bank. First came an ill-looking man in a red fez and a long white shirt, carrying a cane. Then came two or three dozen boys and girls, half naked, footsore, weeping as they limped along, or trying to sing a kind of slow chorus, and following them another man with a cane, which

he freely used to encourage the loiterers. This was a gang of day labourers. The Khedive was filling up some low-lying land with earth taken from the river's bank, and these poor little wretches had been requisitioned from the villages and suburbs to carry the soil from one side of the road to the other. They were paid a microscopic sum—at least it was paid to the taskmaster—and we may hope against hope that they ever got any of it. In the hot midday we passed by the scene of labour and saw them at work, and

after sunset we heard the sad chant of the morning and saw the same processions, without the canes, going home. It was shocking to see young girls carrying huge burdens of earth, or baskets of lime for the builders, or running up and down to the Nile for water for the workers, their feet and often their bare shoulders bleeding. Their lives were indeed "bitter with hard bondage, in mortar and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field." Forced labour is still the rule all through Egypt, as it probably was thirty centuries ago. All the great works have been performed by it.

At the sugar factories in Upper Egypt, at the Canal works, at the railways, and, above all, at the palaces of the Khedive, the labourers are driven to their tasks, and are paid as their masters please.

There has of late been a little improvement in the arrangements at sugar factories, and in one I was recently assured that some small payment was made once a month in silver, but this is under the new management. Under the old the workmen used to receive a portion of treacle, valued at the highest market price, for their wages; and, if they liked, could sell it back again at the lowest price. Just as we may suppose the great pyramids on the long line of hills above the ancient Memphis to be symbolical of the tyranny which afflicted the labouring population of the vast city so many centuries ago, so the earth-works, the long walls, the high roadways, and the palaces of the Khedive are signs of the afflictions which English money enables the Turkish rulers to lay upon Cairo and all Egypt.

To write as the Khedive's apologists have written an Englishman must divest himself of all the ideas in which Englishmen glory. He must blind his eyes to oppression and injustice, must close his ears to the cries of children bleeding from the taskmaster's lash, must steel his heart against pity, lest haply he should see extortion and cruelty and slavery, and be moved to protest against them. I have nothing to say against the view that it is inexpedient we should

become the owners of Egypt. I do not wish to meddle in political questions; but the Englishman who can think or speak favourably of the Turkish rule in Egypt has not seen how the money is made up which is to pay the debt. He knows nothing of the domestic institutions by which money, soldiers, slaves, eunuchs, even estates, are obtained. He has not stood by while land has been seized; sugar mills built by the forced labour of men and women, and little boys and girls; railways made by a requisition of beasts of burden; cane for manufacture grown in spite of the cultivators' wishes, paid for at a price fixed by the buyer, and finally turned into sugar by a conscription of all the able-bodied hands in the district. It is unfortunately but too true that this is the rule and not the exception wherever a manufactory has been started; and yet the apologists wonder that the people are averse to improvement, and prefer agriculture to skilled industry and commerce. Cotton and sugar might be very profitable to them; but as things are at present managed, cotton and sugar stand to them as a cause of ceaseless oppression, of poverty and starvation, of tears and death. No book on the political condition of Egypt can be considered trustworthy which omits to explain that the Turks have turned an elective government into a despotism, have helped themselves to the land where and when they pleased, have by wars and conscriptions deprived the country of the population

which the gain of life over death would have led us to expect, and have, by oppression, extortion, injustice, taxation, forced labour, torture, and every form of misgovernment, rendered themselves so hateful to their subjects that the family of the beneficent ruler, whom English writers extol, cannot appear in the streets without a guard; and that, after fifteen years of his beneficence, the fellah is afraid to have any money or to appear richer than his neighbours.

It cannot be from any inherent defect in the mental constitution of the people of Egypt that they are unable to amass wealth, or to excel in manual industry, or to improve in their system of agriculture. On the contrary, it is easy to see that at a period not very remote their forefathers raised beautiful houses, adorned with cunningly-carved woodwork, carpeted with needlework in divers colours, and built with that idea of permanence so wanting in all the Egyptian houses of to-day. It is easy to see that not long ago, even under such rulers as the Mamelukes, there was a public spirit, an enterprise, an independence now wholly gone.

Personally, no doubt, the Khedive is all he is described by his apologists, indefatigable, humane, well educated, and, above all, hospitable; at least, I have no authentic information to the contrary. But allowing that he is personally the most honest and honourable of men, has he, among all the Turkish officials under him, one who deserves the same character? It

is an insult to common sense to tell us that the slave-trade has ceased on the Nile, or that the Government are doing their best to suppress it, or that the imported negroes are "infinitely better off than the free-born fellahs." How is it that in the streets of Cairo the European traveller is everywhere shocked with the sight of hideous beings who have been mutilated to fit them for the service of the harem, and who swarm at the doors of the innumerable palaces of the Khedive? It is easy to point out the mildness of Oriental slavery, and one recent writer makes a curious statement as a palliation of the crime of employing eunuchs—namely, that they are no longer brought from Assioot, but from Kordofan and Darfur. But it would be instructive to hear what apologists have to say about Sadyk, a man who had been a fellah himself, and who was, therefore, the better able to squeeze the fellahs. The Viceroy was enriched by Sadyk, and when he had done his part he was thrown aside, as a Tudor three hundred years ago in England threw aside his Chancellors.

One would like to know what they have to say about the public sale of Sadyk's domestic slaves at Cairo, a sale almost as abhorrent to the native Egyptian mind as it would be to the English. The fact was officially "explained," but not denied. It would have been interesting to know that the vast estates accumulated by the Minister were returned to their rightful owners. Had it been possible to give an

example of such a reparation, we may feel sure the most would have been made of it. Indeed, it is somewhat surprising that none of his advisers recommended the Viceroy to make such an example for the benefit of his foreign apologists. But the history of Sadyk and the beneficent Government of which he was for so many years the head, is precisely that of the two polypes, of which one reads that they found a worm, and commencing at either end, swallowed and swallowed till they met. Then the larger polype swallowed the smaller.

To say that the Viceregal Government is unpopular with the lower orders would be to speak too favourably of it, as we understand the unpopularity of an English Minister. A recent traveller had occasion to ask a well-to-do fellah if he could say to whom one of the suburban mansions belonged. "It is, of course," was the reply, "a palace of the Khedive now, but it was built by the man who has gone to open the gates of Gehenna for him." Thus a prosperous man, as the Egyptians count prosperity, spoke of his Sovereign and the late Finance Minister. "But," he was asked again, "Sadyk Pasha was banished, not put to death?" "Well, it comes to the same thing," was the answer; "he went to Dongola, and there the coffee did not agree with him." Every traveller who has come into contact with the lower orders in Egypt can tell similar stories if he likes; and it may be asserted broadly that the Turk is quite as much disliked by the Egyptian, be he Copt or

Arab, as by the Greeks or the Armenians. He offends their religious prejudices as well as their sense of justice. One of the first objects seen on arrival at Cairo is a statue representing, in bronze of colossal size, Ibrahim Pasha, the Khedive's father, on horseback. To make statues is a crime of great magnitude to the Moslem mind. It is characteristic of the bastard civilisation grafted upon Egypt by its present rulers, that, though the statue is bronze and a fine work of art, the lofty pedestal is of wood, painted in imitation of stone. A similar and equally typical example of the way in which public works are carried out may be seen in the mosque in the citadel. The walls are lined with slabs of alabaster for about twenty feet from the ground, and above that height are painted and grained in imitation. Immediately below this monstrous monument of Turkish taste is the mosque of Sultan Hassan, an edifice contemporary with our own Salisbury cathedral, and worthy of careful study by every lover of simplicity and beauty in architecture; and here, while countless sums have been laid out on a French Alhambra kind of mosque close by, the whole building is going to destruction from neglect; its exquisite fretwork of precious inlays dropping from the walls, the roof of the central kiosque stripped off in great patches, the beautiful Syrian lamps, so much praised in the guide-books, all gone, and the vane of the graceful minaret bowing to its fall. Yet it may be safely predicted that something of Sultan Hassan's building

will remain long after every palace of the Khedive has disappeared.

English bondholders may wonder where their money has gone, but a few days in Cairo would soon settle their minds. Let them look at the palaces, as aforesaid ; let them walk past two or three of the vast barracks, each filled with black regiments, every man of which has been bought from a slave-dealer in Central Africa and transported at immense cost, in spite of all treaties with the abolitionists. Let them stand aside as two grooms in purple and gold and fine linen clear the way for a magnificent pair of English high-stepping horses, drawing the carriage in which one of the Viceregal family is seated, while a couple of hussars trot at the wheels; let them, in short, see Cairo as it is, and not through the false gloss of half French civilisation which its Turkish conquerors have imposed on it.

A WINDOW IN CAIRO.

OBELISK IN CAIRO.

CHAPTER III.

THE FELLAH.

Heliopolis—The Delta—The Peasant Cultivator—Towfik Pasha—The Obelisk—The Inscription—Other Obelisks.

THE greenest drive near Cairo and the shadiest is to On, the place to which the Greeks gave the name of Heliopolis. Of the city and temple nothing visible

remains, except a mud wall and the famous obelisk, an obelisk on which English visitors always make the remark that Joseph must have seen it. To my mind it is more interesting to reflect that it was where it still stands full 1,000 years before Joseph came into Egypt. The obelisk is there still, and many other things remain just as he saw them—the green fields, the degraded labourer, the wide, flat expanse stretching away towards the north, the yellow sandy hills closing in towards the south, and the silver waves of the river here dividing into the great arms which encompass and water the rich districts of the Delta.

It is well worth while to climb the Mokattem Hill above Cairo, for the sake of seeing this view alone. The position of Heliopolis is seen as on a map, and the old site of Memphis, ten miles higher up, is easily made out from the fringe of pyramids which stretches between it and the western desert.

This view and the drive or ride to Heliopolis will give a stranger a very good idea of the immense fertility of all the land upon which the annual inundation comes. If the level is one inch, nay, half an inch above the inundation, the soil is sandy and barren.

On the road the great palace of Abbas Pasha is passed, and close to it an enormous barrack, which a year ago was crowded with soldiers. The tall octagon towers are signal stations, which Abbas built to protect him from any danger of insurrection.

He had a morbid dread that he would be assassinated. Perhaps conscience made a coward of him for, though by no means a bad ruler, he was addicted to the most hideous vice, and in the event his fears were but too well justified. While he was residing at a palace at Benha, in the Delta, a quarrel or intrigue among his wretched favourites led to the entrance of two of them into his chamber at night, when they put him to a death of such cruelty that the fate of Edward in Berkeley Castle was comparatively merciful.

Past the Abasseeyeh the road enters a grove of cactus, while feathery sont-trees arch overhead. Half a mile further and we are on the soil of the Delta, and surrounded by a beautiful greenness to which no painter can do justice.

The land, as its peasant cultivators say, is gold, not mud. For ordinary crops it requires no manure and little labour. The yield, with the most primitive tillage, is enormous. Two crops of corn may be grown in a year, or even three. The moment a canal is made, the ground in its vicinity grows green. It needs no preparation for the seed but a little surface scratching and small watercourses for irrigation. Along the Nile the shadoof goes all day long, except during the inundation, when it is not required. In some places the sakia, with its rows of graceful earthen jars, raises water both day and night. At the wheel two yoke of patient oxen relieve each

other, driven by a child who ought to be at school. The Khedive spent a great deal of money in putting up large pumping-engines; but they have turned out useless, partly because of the non-existence of fuel, partly because the smaller parts wear out, and cannot be replaced by native workmen. There was lately some talk of cutting a canal and floating wood down from the Upper Nile. M. Lesseps has lately been over the ground, but bondholders have by this time become chary of their help. Meanwhile the old labour-wasting methods must be retained. New canals might be multiplied indefinitely, always with splendid results, but, under the present system of forced labour, they can only be cut at the cost of the lives of many bread-winners. The Fellah, drafted away from his home, hard worked, ill-fed, harshly treated, dies of the slightest illness. It used to be said that, when a new canal was begun, the Khedive secured the land nearest to it, his officers what came next, and the Fellah who made it got little or no benefit. He is obliged still to stand at his bucket, and, with only a rag round his loins, work the water up to his little tenement, while the intense sun blazes down on his bare back and shaven head. It is unlikely that any private enterprise can spring up amongst the people to improve the cultivation of their farms. They are too poor, and have not time to learn about new inventions. The fine climate prevents them from being braced to exertion and

rebellion, as would be the case in a more northerly country. But they do feel very sore to see the land slipping into the hands of large proprietors who take all the finest ground for sugar-canes.

The name of Fellaheen is properly only applied to the inhabitants of the Delta. The true Fellah is a very different person from the proud Arab of the Howara.

Constant ill-usage has made him a coward and a liar, but he has courage and endurance when suffering is inevitable. You may see a man at work in heavy irons, yet he wears a cheerful countenance, and greets an old acquaintance with a pleasant laugh. He has committed no crime, and everybody knows it; but a crime had been committed, and somebody had to be punished. "Khismet" willed that he should be charged, and, having no money to bribe the judge, he is condemned. So, too, the old story is still true that rather than pay an increased tax, he will submit to the bastinado, and may be heard to boast of the number of blows he can bear, and the weeks during which he was unable to put his feet to the ground. He looks upon the Government as his natural enemy, and with good cause regards taxation as a Border farmer must have regarded black mail. To him the Khedive is the lineal successor of the Bedouin freebooter who robbed his forefathers. He has no remedy against an overcharge, and no voice in the assessment of the tax. If there were a printed

form setting forth his liabilities, it would be useless, for he could not read it. By nature he is gay, sober, and saving, yet he can be lavish on occasions, and does not grudge money spent in hospitality or charity.

His own wants are few, but among them is music. Nothing can be done without singing. He sings at work, at play, in the field, at the wedding, at the funeral, as he rows his boat, as he rides his camel, in fact everywhere. Sometimes, as when he works the shadoof, there is a great beauty in the oft-repeated cadence; but generally the European ear can find no melody in his music. The scale differs so much from ours that it cannot be played on any of our keyed instruments; and the principles on which it is founded are so involved that it is hardly possible even for a trained musician to unravel it. There is probably a mixture of the Greek and Asiatic scales; possibly there is a remnant of old Egyptian harmony. The scientific musician finds much to interest him in following a song on the violin, but to the vulgar musical ear it is distracting. It may be roundly asserted that the attempts made by Lane and by others to write Arab melodies in our notation are ludicrous failures. The native performers sometimes show great skill in manipulating an instrument with two strings, and some Egyptian Paganini may blush unheard and waste his sweetness among dusky sailors on the Nile. At Cairo a leaning towards the

European scale is sometimes very perceptible, owing to the opera companies which go there every year; and the military bands practise a kind of compromise which is most distressing to hear: but a concert of expert native performers in the Esbekeeyeh Gardens is well worth hearing. In the country, singers extemporise to a tune, but have special airs appropriate to all possible occasions. No other art is practised, and life goes on under the most simple conditions.

The Fellah wears but one garment, and suffers from cold in winter, for he has no fire and no bedclothes, except perhaps a kind of quilt. He lives on unleavened bread, sour milk, raw vegetables, but sometimes for weeks together has nothing but dried dates. In towns the food is sold ready cooked, and consists of different kinds of haricots and lentils. His house is roofless, except for a few canes laid across the low mud walls. It contains no furniture; but in Upper Egypt there is generally a mat at the door and a sort of raised divan made of mud. He can afford but one wife, who, like himself, has but one garment and a hood or veil, while his children go naked. In this respect, indeed, travellers remark greater poverty year by year. There is immense mortality among the children, partly, no doubt, from the dirt in which they are kept, as they are never washed before they are seven years old, but partly also from the absence of medical aid and the universal ignorance of the causes of disease. The women

are in every respect inferior to the men. They are too poor to have employment; they have no stockings to darn, no house linen to mend, no furniture or cooking implements to clean. They wash their one garment in the river, cleaning it with a piece of mud which acts like soap and pumice combined. They wear their bracelets and necklaces in the field where they pull corn or herd the cattle. They carry all the

FELLAH WOMEN.

water required in their houses from the river in heavy jars, and sit long on the bank gossiping and catching fleas. Their highest idea of life consists in doing nothing. The daughters of a family are kept at home as long as possible, as it is a mark of respectability to retain them at least till they reach fifteen; but this advanced age is only attained in comparatively wealthy homes.

Before his door is a row of round mud bins like barrels for storing corn; and there are separate pigeon-houses. The pigeons everywhere eat more than they are worth, and contribute greatly to the dirt of the houses in Lower Egypt. Fever is rare, considering the filth, but there are stomach complaints and innumerable skin diseases of great severity. Ophthalmia is said to be decreasing in Cairo since the opening of wider and better-watered streets, but everywhere else it is very common, and seems to be carried by the flies from child to child. There is also a mysterious sleeping sickness, about which doctors differ; it is always fatal. A man comes home from his work, lies down, and sleeps for three days, when he dies. It is impossible to get leave to make a post-mortem examination, though English physicians have repeatedly attempted it.

It is hard to imagine a more dreary existence than that led by the ordinary Fellah. He is born, works hard all his life for wages of which he is robbed at intervals under the name of government, and dies in his birthplace, his whole view through life having been bounded by the table-topped mountain at his own side of the river and the table-topped mountain at the other, under whose rocky sides a few little mud domes, a few little heaps of shining pebbles, mark the nameless graves of his people, the place to which, when the end comes, his body will be rowed across the Nile to a chant from the Koran, just as five

thousand years ago his forefathers were ferried over to the mummy pits, while a hymn was sung to Osiris, the Judge of the Dead.

The agriculture of the ordinary Fellah of the Delta is carried on under the simplest conditions. His year begins on the 11th of September, when the Nile is generally at or near its highest level. The thick, turbid water flows over thousands of acres and gives back in purple shadows the scintillating blue of the cloudless skies. Scattered amidst this sea of liquid mud rise hillocks, most of them artificial, covered with one-story mud huts, which look ready to melt away into the flood below. On the roofs sit rows of naked children, surrounded by pigeons, barn-door fowl, and perhaps a few young kids, all basking in the vivid sunshine. The only subject of conversation amongst the men in the village is the height to which the river has risen or is likely to rise. A few feet more or less to those poor people makes the difference between abject misery and comparative plenty, for their wants are few and easily supplied. If the overflow is too scanty, the desert comes creeping up and remorselessly swallows the fields where luxuriant crops are wont to wave. If the river rises too high, great damage is done, not only to the wretched villages which it carries away, but to the dykes, which are made at considerable expenditure of time and labour, and which serve both as pathways and defences from a flood. The

palm-trees, which, like the Irishman's pig, are often counted upon to pay the rent, are frequently swept away, and in some cases the cattle also. It is a deluge without rain. The field mice must leave their haunts, and, accompanied by the bright lizards, take refuge on any high ground that offers. Enormous numbers of frogs and toads are drowned or eaten by the flocks of water and marsh birds which come from the Mediterranean and the lakes of Lower Egypt as soon as the inundation has become general. The Fellah is relieved from the hard toil of the shadoof, and can lie for a considerable part of the day at the door of his hut, smoking, chatting, or fondling his little children.

Dr. Klunzinger gives such a good account of the method of raising water by the shadoof that I must quote it in full. It is the best I have ever met with, and is an example of the painstaking accuracy which characterises the whole of his book on Upper Egypt:—

"In the soft and steep banks of the river, or of a canal, a number of trenches, with terraces behind them, are dug above each other, the number depending on the height of the bank; at the top a reservoir is constructed, the bottom of which is often strengthened by layers of reeds or palm-stems. The principle of raising the water is similar to that of a draw-well, perhaps still more practical. On the upper ends of two pillars, formed of rough palm-stems, or more commonly of clay, a cross-beam is firmly attached; and, under the middle of this, a long beam is balanced by means of a cord and bar joint (so that it may move freely up and down). Behind, that is, at the shorter

end, the end further from the river, this beam terminates in a colossal ball of clay; from the other end hangs a palm-twig, to the lower extremity of which a bucket, usually of leather, is fastened. It is the duty of the labourers standing on the terraces to fill the bucket in the lowest basin and to empty the contents into the next above it. The bucket is raised by the weight of the clay ball on the arm of the lever, and the workman has only to guide it. Thus even in ancient times did men discover how to save labour by mechanical means. Having reached the highest basin, the water flows by a small channel on to the border channels of the fields that are to be watered. When the river rises, one terrace after another is swept away; and, when it sinks again, as many new ones are constructed every year. The motive-power in these water-raising apparatus is a class of men called 'fathers of the shadoof,' who, in classical brown nakedness, enliven at intervals the banks of the Nile, and every now and then utter shrill and plaintive cries, while the beams groan and the buckets splash."

Although written about Upper Egypt, this passage is true of the Delta, and indeed of every place where water comes, whether by river or canal.

As the Nile recedes, the peasant's short holiday comes to an end. It is time to begin to plough or scratch the fertile deposit left on the fields. His spade is the adze of his forefathers, and his harrow a palm-trunk cut from the nearest grove. The water which has saturated the land is so impregnated with ammonia and organic matter that no further manuring is necessary, and no deep steam-ploughing is required, as the air reaches the soil through the cracks made by the burning sun. The large number of canals which have been cut lately mitigate the loss caused by a bad

Nile, but only to a certain degree. If, however, they could be cut high up the country and above their present level, the necessity for artificial irrigation would be enormously lessened. In October begins the sowing of the numberless trefoils, which produce fodder in abundance both for man and beast, as the shoots of some of the species are eagerly eaten by the natives. Flax, wheat, and barley are also planted, most of them being slightly sheltered from the keen north wind by tufts of dry grass stuck in the ground. As the days shorten, the nights become very cold, particularly towards sunrise ; and about the end of November the European often finds himself wishing for a fire as he heaps coverings on his bed in the clear rose-coloured dawn.

During this autumn weather the durra, a sort of maize which stood during the inundation, is gathered in. The women may be seen at the doors of their houses, sometimes alone, sometimes in groups, "grinding at the mill," singing monotonous ditties, or retailing to each other the gossip which is even more plentiful in an Arab village than in an English one. It was the failure of this crop in the Saeed which caused the famine of this year. After the durra is reaped most of the winter crops of lentils, chick peas, wheat, barley, beans, peas, lupins, safflower, lettuce, flax, poppy, durra, are sown, and soon the bands of emerald green, so remarkable in an Egyptian landscape, begin to fringe the river, growing broader as

the water recedes, leaving each week a few more inches of arable land to the industrious cultivator. In December some of the clover is ready for its first cutting, much to the satisfaction of the animals, who have had little but dry forage for months. The poor beasts have not much enjoyment in their lives, for they are half starved, and worked to death. The state of the donkeys and camels in the small villages is sometimes pitiable. It is impossible to ride them with the least pleasure, as they are almost sure either to have broken knees or galled backs. Still, with a heap of fragrant clover before them and a deep bed of sand in which to roll, they, like their masters, forget their real troubles in a momentary bliss. The children, too, are enjoying themselves, and sit sucking the fresh sticks of sugar-cane which are now being cut down. Indeed the idle moments of all the inhabitants seem devoted to tearing the cane in pieces with their strong white teeth and crunching the crisp juicy stalks. The quantity which the sailors of a smart dehabeah consume during the voyage up and down the Nile is scarcely credible. The atmosphere is now sometimes unpleasant when there is not a brisk wind, for evaporation is going on rapidly, and mists may be seen in the morning all along the river banks, but only rising a few feet as a rule. The dews are often excessive.

By the end of January the Nile water becomes much clearer, the greatest cold is over, and a delicious

fresh warmth gives new life to the invalids who have suffered somewhat from the great difference of temperature between midday and midnight. In the following month the birds begin to pair, the lambs dot the fields, and in the ground watered by the canals and not submerged by the inundations some flowers may be found. It is interesting to watch the great flocks of waterfowl as they go to and from their feeding-grounds, sometimes in long strings, sometimes in clouds which almost darken the air. Then with a good opera-glass one can examine the habits of the various tribes of waders which fringe the shallow reaches of the river where there is no traffic, or study that most repulsive of all birds, a vulture, as he squats gorged on the burning sand. The swallows skim about overhead in the clear air, their plumage shining with an iridescence never seen in our grey atmosphere. The sand-martins dart out in clouds as they are disturbed by a passing boat or raft laden with earthenware jars.

After Easter come the south winds, so much dreaded by the natives, to which they attribute most of their illnesses. The Khamseen (literally "fifty," so called because it is said to last for fifty days) is certainly most oppressive to Europeans, for the same height of thermometer which with a northerly breeze only means comfortable warmth, with a southerly wind means exhausting and oppressive heat. The harvest is begun, and, owing

to the graceful oriental dresses, is, to a certain degree, a picturesque sight, but not for a moment to be compared to an English field with its hedgerows and trees, its wild roses and bramble-berries. There is no harvest home, no thanksgiving when all is safely gathered in, only the visit of the tax-collector, whose rapacity is not satisfied until he is sure he has not left the Fellah anything beyond a bare subsistence in return for his year of hard work. All through the summer irrigation must be carried on, but in Upper Egypt a large acreage is allowed to lie fallow; hence the finer crops of wheat. Only a portion near the river bank is cultivated for the melons and cucumbers which form the staple diet of the Arabs during the hot season. Perhaps June is the most unhealthy month, as it is that in which the river is at its lowest, and when the smells, always bad, are at their worst. But soon the tropical rains in Central Africa begin to swell the stream thousands of miles below; the rapid flow carries away the miasma that had begun to affect the usually healthy population, and the ever-recurring question again arises, whether there will be a "good Nile."

Before Heliopolis is reached, a great palace, that of Choobra, is passed. Here Towfik, the Khedive's eldest son, generally resides. He has a good name among the people in comparison with his brothers: but it may be accounted for by remembering that

he was not born in his present elevated position as heir to the Viceregal throne. His mother, as I have heard, was a slave. Her master's second wife—the Khedive has now the full number allowed by the Prophet—besides, it is said, and probably with truth, three hundred concubines,—the second wife was the first to present him with a boy. Soon afterwards the slave also presented his highness with a son, named Mohammed Towfik, and in compliance with the usual Moslem custom, she was eventually added to the number of his wives, making the fourth. Then commenced the negotiations and intrigues for altering the succession, to make it hereditary in Ismail's family. The second wife was her husband's favourite, and her son would be his heir. Fabulous sums have been named as having been spent on the Sultan and his "advisers" in order to obtain this favour. Of course, the unhappy Fellah has now to pay the bill. Just as the arrangements were brought to a successful conclusion, the son of the second wife died, and so the son of the bondwoman became heir to the throne. It may be guessed that this unfortunate conclusion did not please the Khedive, especially as, within a few years, his second wife presented him once more with a son, Ibrahim, the same who was lately in England.

Towfik Pasha and his mother live at this white house near Heliopolis; and the gardens and the

luxuriant trees add much to the beauty of the drive.

The famous "Virgin's Tree" is the next object of interest. It was presented by the Khedive to the Empress of the French: and I suppose she leases it out to its present keeper, who has put a fence round it, and makes it a paying show. He has a kind of public house or café adjoining, and altogether there is something so disgusting in the surroundings of what should be a sacred spot, that I have never been able to bring myself to visit it. Baedecker, indeed, says positively that the tree was only planted a couple of hundred years ago, but I am informed by a competent judge that it may really be as old as the Christian era, and that, at all events, the story that it was only planted in 1672, is the most incredible of the two.

The obelisk is a little further on, the nearest village being Mataarieh, which stands on an ancient site. It is in the centre of one of the greenest fields I ever saw, and is buried some six or seven feet in the rich black soil. All its ruddy companions, for there must have been a dozen or more in the time of Joseph, are gone. I was amused to see at one of my visits, a little hawk, of the kind which the ancient Egyptians worshipped as Horus, perched close above the representation of the sacred bird in the inscription.

The whole inscription is as follows :—

"The Horus of the Sun,
The life of all who are born,
The lord of the Upper and the Lower Land,
'The Creator, the living image of the Sun' (Cheper Ka Ra),
The King of the Double Crown,
The life of all who are born,
The Son of the Sun,
'Usertasen,'
The beloved of the spirits of On,
Everliving,
The Golden Horus,
The life of all who are born,
The beauteous god,
'Cheper Ka Ra'
Has made this work
In the beginning of the thirty years cycle,—
He—the dispenser of life for evermore."

There is a certain poetry in all this bombast. "The beloved of the spirits of On," the king who favoured the wise men, the wits of the temple where all the learning of the Egyptians was stored, shows himself in a not unfavourable light. He is known to have restored the temple of the sun here, after the troublous times of the eleventh dynasty. Probably he drove out the strangers who had colonised the Delta, and became once more, what he here calls himself, "Lord of the Double Crown." But the old simplicity is gone. The inscriptions of the pyramid builders were very different, not only in their style, but also in the very letters with which they were written.

In the dark ages between the fall of the old

monarchy of the pyramid builders and the accession of the twelfth dynasty, the worship of the gods had entered on a new stage; and this temple of Heliopolis must have become a regular menagerie of sacred animals. Here Apis himself abode on his way to take up his permanent residence with Ptah at Mennofer, over the way. Here Menevis was accounted the living emblem of Ra, the sun. Here were also the two yellow lions, the ruddy hawk, the cats, the white sow, and above all, the mysterious Vennoo, or Phœnix, a bird represented on the monuments as something like an egret.

The question is sometimes asked, What is there wonderful about an obelisk? It is not an unreasonable question. Our ideas of the architectural art have never been made to include any reference to the size of the materials of a building. It does not, at first sight, occur to us that it can matter very much whether a temple is made of bricks a few inches thick, or of stones as many feet, so that the temple itself is a work of magnitude. The ancient Egyptians and the so-called Cyclopean builders thought differently. And it must be allowed that if they erred, it was in a right direction. People often boast that there are few pieces of architecture in any European city more satisfactory than the Quadrant in Regent Street; but they do not reflect that from an Egyptian point of view it would fall far short of architecture. It is built of miserable little

bricks, and covered over with plaster and paint in imitation of pilasters. It is little, if at all, better than a piece of theatrical scenery. But, judging in this way, we have no great building in London. Perhaps the portico at the British Museum may be called great from the magnitude of the stones of which the pillars are made. They are forty-five feet in height, and each shaft consists of only eight drums. But the column of Diocletian at Alexandria has a shaft, probably an obelisk rounded, seventy-three feet high, consisting of a single block of granite taller than the whole of one of the Ionic columns at the British Museum, from base to entablature.

The earliest building in the world of which we have any authentic account is a temple near the Pyramids, recently discovered. This was made of blocks of red granite in a rude style which may remind the English traveller of Stonehenge; but each block is of such a size that Stonehenge shrinks into nothing beside it. Some of them are eighteen feet long and seven feet high. It is evident, in short, that to the Egyptians of all ages, from the age of the Pyramid builders to that of the Roman Emperors, the size of the materials of which a building was to be made was a powerful consideration. Unquestionably they secured stability. The difficulty which English engineers recently experienced in moving Cleopatra's Needle gives us a reason why so many obelisks and temples are still standing. There are stones at Karnac forty feet

long. On the roof of the temple at Edfou there are stones twenty feet by twelve, and more than three feet thick. Such a roof may fall of itself; but there is probably no engineer in Egypt who could pull it down without gunpowder or steam. We have nothing of this sort in England. The architects of such buildings as Salisbury Cathedral early taught us that greatness of parts is not necessary to grandeur of effect; but this lesson never seems to have occurred to the Egyptians, though the Greeks knew it, as the little Parthenon proves, and the Romans acted on it, but without the same success. The wonder of the obelisk then is that it consists of a single stone.

Every writer on the subject has speculated as to the mechanical means by which these great masses were moved. There were shrines and colossal statues as heavy as obelisks. The description given by Herodotus of a shrine, "an edifice built of a single block," which he saw at Sais, will be fresh in the reader's memory. It was twenty-one cubits long, fourteen broad, and eight high, and 2,000 men were employed for three years in transporting it by boat from the quarry to its destination. In the tomb of an official of the court of Usertasen, not far from Beni Hassan, there is a representation of the removal of such a colossus, a statue about twenty feet high. Four rows of foreign captives, forty-three in each row, are made to drag the sledge, and seven companies of men are waiting to take their turn at the

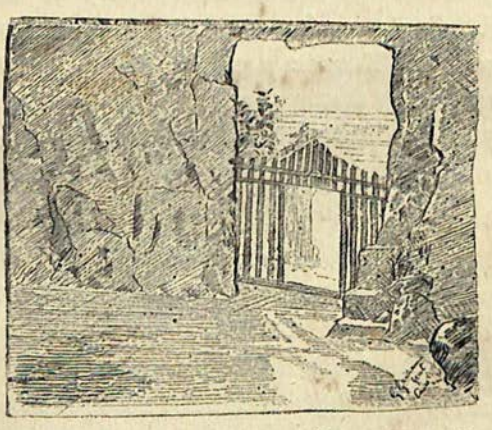
ropes. If so many slaves could be secured for the service of a subject, how many more would be employed by a king like Rameses or a queen like Hatasoo. Mr. Poynter has saved us the trouble of trying to realise the scene which must have been presented when one of these exhibitions of brutal power took place; but it will be impossible for any one who has actually visited Egypt and seen obelisks at home not to remember, every time he looks at our own obelisk on the Embankment, the scenes through which it must have passed on its way from the ridge of the granite hill behind Syene to an island in the West of which the Egyptians had never heard.

We have made a terrible mistake in putting this obelisk on the said Embankment. It is literally lost there. The only absolutely suitable site in London was the front of the British Museum, where we should have had a measure by which to judge of it in the eight-drum columns of the portico, and where, moreover, it would have been a curiosity among curiosities, instead of a monstrous anachronism, a heathen emblem of questionable decency, in the midst of a so-called Christian city.

The Egyptians always put their obelisks close to buildings of great size. Four obelisks were placed within the temple at Karnac, and two are still standing. Here we find them, not in a wide open space, nor among buildings which they overtop, but in narrow courts. The taller of the two is the tallest

now remaining perfect. It measures ninety-two feet from the ground, and its companion is not much less, being about seventy-five. At Luxor, a few miles off, another pair remained till lately; but one of them now graces the Place de la Concorde. These two were in a wider space than the four at Karnac, but they were close to the face of the great propylons, by which it might have been expected that they would be completely dwarfed. But the ancient builders knew better. The wall behind them is composed of enormous blocks of sandstone. Yet this single piece of granite reaches nearly to the top of the wall. Such is the reflection suggested by their situation. At Karnac you see the point of the tall pillar appearing above the tops of the palms, and of the gigantic buildings close to it; but you see only the point until you are near enough to recognise that it is a monolith. The whole world cannot show such another block, yet it is a small thing, considered merely as a building. To see it aright you must, said its designers, see it near; or, if any of it is to be revealed to the world at large, it must be the extremity only, and that surrounded by great columns and lofty gates, so that a scale is ready to assist your eye in estimating its size when at length you enter the narrow precincts of the court from whose floor it shoots up into the blue sky above your head. This evidently was the idea of the obelisk-makers, and they were undoubtedly right. An obelisk built up of

little bits of stone is not really an obelisk; and at Paris the great open place, the fountains, the bridge, the distant portico, all go, not to enhance the size of the monolith, but to diminish it. So, too, the wide roadway and gardens, the magnificent sweep of the granite quay, the great breadth of the river, the mighty span of the railway bridge, all dwarf Cleopatra's Needle, and deprive it of everything but its purely antiquarian interest.



CAVE ON THE MOKATTEM: THE "ROAD TO SUEZ."

TOMBS OF THE SULTANS.

CHAPTER IV.

DERVISHES.

The Coptic and Muslim Calendars—The Egyptian Saints' Days—The Dervish is not a Monk—The Colours of Turbans—The Descendants of Mohammed—The Pilgrims' Return—The Mahmal—The Doseh.

IT is almost impossible for a stranger to know beforehand the date at which any Coptic or Muslim ceremony will take place. Mr. Michell's *Calendar* will help him, no doubt; but even this most able and careful work will not prophesy a delay in the return of the pilgrims, or in the rising of the Nile, or the

cloudiness of the first night of a moon. Moreover, in addition to the European ways of counting time, in Egypt both the Copts and the Mahometans have their respective almanacks, and go by them. The Coptic is of the greatest interest to students of the ancient remains, and the most curious part of the Coptic calendar is formed of the Ephemeridal Notices for every day in the year. These quaint sentences remind us of the remarks in Partridge and other almanacks of a hundred years ago; but they are of a much more important character than might be supposed at first sight. When we read that the 23rd of January is a "good season for marriages," or that on the nineteenth of August there is "feebleness of bile," we are only disposed to be amused. But Mr. Michell reminds us that these notes have been in use for thousands of years, and have survived all revolutions. "They are the echoes," he says, "of a distant past, and they sum up the wisdom of ages in matters of agriculture and hygiene." The modern calendar, in short, is the old calendar of the days referred to even under the Ptolemies as ancient, and "with its paternal, and often naïve, advice has embalmed the thoughts and observations of some of the most ancient of mummies." The modern Copts date from what they call the "era of Martyrs," that is, the second year of Diocletian, A.D. 289; and the present year, 1295 of the Hejra, corresponds with parts of the two Coptic years 1594-1595. Their bis-

sextile system starts from the so-called era of Menophres, their leap-year always preceding ours. This era of Menophres is of an antiquity so remote that it takes us back to the time of Moses. Whether or not Menophres was the Menephtah of some writers and the Pharaoh of the Exodus, his era is B.C. 1322. In that year it was observed that the first day of the first month, which had, as it were, been travelling backwards through the seasons, fell exactly upon the day of the heliacal rising of the star Sothis. It was ascertained that 365¼ days elapsed between two such risings at the latitude of Memphis. This Sothic year, the *annus quadratus* of Pliny, was known to the Ptolemies as the Alexandrine, and was converted by Sosigenes into the Julian year. Sosigenes, an Egyptian himself, merely transferred the New Year's Day from autumn to winter, taking the reputed date of the foundation of Rome as his era. But in Egypt the first day of the year has remained the same, and the Copts actually keep the same New Year's Day and call their first month by the same name as the Pharaohs more than thirty centuries ago.

Before this Sothic year was discovered, however, at least two other systems are ascertained to have been in use. The earliest of which we have any knowledge consisted of 360 days, and was the first unintercalated solar year. It seems probable that this ancient term was employed down to a late period for registering the dates of kings, and the festivals kept according to

it must be the most ancient. A second system was that of 365 days, also of remote antiquity. It was looked upon as a great discovery, with its five intercalary days; and it became and continued the sacred year, many festivals being celebrated according to it. An interesting subject for research is here offered. The comparative antiquity of some customs and observances might be ascertained by a reference to their places in one or other of the three systems. But the era of Martyrs is, as we have seen, regulated according to the Sothic period; and, beginning as it does with the month dedicated to Thoth, and now called Tout, it follows, no doubt, the original nomenclature of the months. Thus Babeh is the old Paopi; Hatour is Athor, the Egyptian Venus; Kyhak is Koiak; Abib is Epiphi, and so on. The only things that have changed apparently are the names of the festivals; but Mr. Michell points out in several places that some modern celebrations, not Coptic only, but also Muslim, are survivals of the great days of the ancient Pharaonic Empire. In some districts of Upper Egypt the old division of three seasons is still kept up, and the directions, strange and quaint as they are, in the Coptic Calendar, are still useful as an agricultural guide.

The Muslim Calendar is wholly different, although it would seem that many Muslim festivals are of Coptic origin. The lunar system is in use, an attempt made before the time of Mohammed to modify it

and to adopt a "luni-solar" system having failed to satisfy the conditions of either set of astronomical phenomena. The names of some of the Arab months betray their origin by referring to the changes of the seasons. Ramadan, for example, signifies "Great Heat." But in the course of a single generation the Arab festivals revolve through the whole year, and the "Great Heat" falls alternately in every season. The ordinary Egyptian Almanack of the present day is a little book of some fifty or sixty pages. For the month of Ramadan—when the long fast, answering to Lent, is kept—special diaries are prepared, printed on single sheets of coloured paper, or on silk for presentation. The Muslim Calendars are, however, so irregularly kept that it is only by comparing several and striking an average that Mr. Michell was enabled to form his version. As it is, he confesses himself unable in several cases to do more than approximate to the date of a "Moulid."

The Moulid E'Nebi is the great festival of all the year for the dervishes.

Our ideas of dervishes are rather confused by our knowledge of monasticism in Europe. But a dervish is not a monk. He is only a devotee. To belong to an order of dervishes only gives a man religious privileges like those possessed, or supposed to be possessed, by the elders of a dissenting church in England. On certain days in the year the members of an order assemble in certain mosques where they

recite certain prayers. All dervishes excite themselves particularly about the time of the Prophet's birthday, and gathering from their different employments, devote themselves during the "octave" to the performance of their peculiar rites, generally termed *Zikrs*, in his honour. The most important of these zikrs or services is that called the *Dosch* or treading, which I witnessed in 1878, and shall describe further on.

The chief outward distinction of dervishes is the colour of the turban. The descendants of Mohammed, a large class, form a kind of religious order themselves. They have certain endowments, left at different ages by the faithful, and their chief, whose appointment is confirmed by the Khedive, has a good house in Cairo and another on the island of Roda, as well as ample revenues. He and all his fellow-descendants wear green turbans. Whenever you meet a man with a green turban you know he is descended in the female line from Mohammed. The descendants are distinguished into two principal families, the *saeeds* or "lords," and the *shereefs* or "sacred." In addition to these there is a family descended from Aboo Bekr, the head of which is known as the Sheykh el Bekri. The present sheykh holds the responsible office of chief of all the dervish orders in Egypt: and the treading takes place when the Sheykh of the Saidieh, one of the orders in the Sheykh el Bekri's jurisdiction, comes to pay a ceremonial visit to his superior on the Prophet's birthday.

In Lane's time the Sheykh el Bekri had an official residence near what is now the garden of the Esbekeeyeh: but the house has been removed, and now the visit is paid to the Sheykh in a tent which is placed in a hollow near the road to Boolak.

The most numerous dervishes are those of an offshoot of the great Ahmedieh order, the sect of Bayoomeh. They wear red turbans, and are common in the streets of Cairo, on the Nile boats, and everywhere in short. The black turban used to be the distinctive sign of Jews and Copts, but it is now worn by the members of the Roofayeh order. I have seen a bright blue turban at one or two places in Upper Egypt, but have not been able to discover if it was the uniform of a dervish order, or a relic of the blue turban which Copts used to be obliged to wear.

At the zikrs, dervishes of each sect have their own class-leader, and tents in which they "howl": standing in a circle and calling upon God, to the sound of slow music, bowing at each utterance of the sacred name. I have heard much ridicule cast upon the performance by English visitors, but the men are evidently sincere, and, in truth, the zikr is no more ridiculous, religiously speaking, than many a performance I have witnessed in Methodist meeting-houses or Papist chapels.

As if to make up for the want of the Roman Carnival in 1878, tourists had an extra treat at Cairo. By a fortunate coincidence the solemn return of the

pilgrims happened in the same week as the birthday of the Prophet. From the number of Europeans present at the great ceremonies it might almost have been supposed that they were got up for the entertainment of strangers. But both the procession of the *Mahmal* and the horrible *Doseh* are strictly religious observances. Though mixed up with much that we should consider almost profane, they are in reality not more foreign to the ordinary religious sentiment than many of our Christmas and Easter customs, and are certainly better than much which usually goes on at the Carnival in Florence or Paris.

The return of the pilgrims from Mecca is in many respects an affecting and solemn sight. It culminates in the procession of the embroidered litter which has been carried with the caravan and comes back to its place in the citadel. This procession commemorates the pilgrimage of a famous lady, and is an emblem of female sovereignty. The great sultana, Shegeret e' Door, widow of Saleh, who died in 1249, made her pilgrimage in a magnificent camel litter, and since her time such a litter has been carried with each annual caravan. It has been renewed at intervals, and is now resplendent with scarlet and gold; but it is not to be confounded with the *Kisweh*, a black and white pall made every year for the temple of Mecca, which travels with it, and is used until the next pilgrimage, when it is brought back, cut in pieces, and distributed among the faithful.

The return of the pilgrims, with the *Mahmal* and the *Kisweh*, usually takes place some ten days or more before the *Moulid e' Nebi*, the festival which commemorates the birth and death of the Prophet, on the 12th day of the month of *Rabeea el Owwal;* but in 1878 the fear of cholera and quarantine delays made the pilgrims late. The use of the lunar calendar for Muslim festivals fixes the date of these celebrations twelve days earlier every year, according to our computation. Ceremonies which for thirty years have been performed in autumn or summer when few Europeans were in Egypt now take place in the height of the tourists' season, and will for some years to come add to the attractions of a winter at Cairo. Horrible as the *Doseh* seems, it is but seldom any one is hurt by the horse's hoofs. He wears flat plates, like an English race-horse, instead of shoes, and is carefully led; but the performance is not approved by orthodox Muslims, and it must be allowed that it savours unpleasantly of Juggernaut.

There is an open space known as the Rumeyleh below the citadel, where in old times executions took place. It now communicates with an arid waste of great size called the "Place Mohammed Ali," and the two form a public parade-ground where many ceremonials, reviews, and processions are held. The small, half-ruined mosque of Mahmoud at the north-eastern corner offers a shady place on its steps from

which the English traveller who wants to see the people as well as the Mahmal, and who prefers to avoid the European and to study the native sightseer, may take his stand. On his right is the mosque of Sultan Hassan, the beauties of which he may examine at his leisure while waiting. On his left is the lower gate of the citadel, the walls of which extend in a long perspective towards a row of consular tents and pavilions erected for distinguished visitors and the ladies of the hareem. Facing the tents is the railway station, and the whistle offers a strange accompaniment to the droning of Arab songs and the thumping of tarabookas. Beyond are the rubbish heaps of Old Cairo, and on the pink horizon the angular forms of two of the Pyramids are clearly visible beyond the domes and minarets of the middle distance.

The seated part of the crowd consists chiefly of women and children. The men are in the procession, or walking about in the roadway, their gay dresses looking brilliantly gorgeous in the sunshine. The women sit under the shadow of the citadel, some on carpets, some on the bare ground. Even the battlements above are, so to speak, manned by women. The traveller who has heard much of the seclusion of the sex is surprised at their number and their apparent freedom from restraint. Veils, more or less transparent, are worn by most of them; but when some twenty carriages, with English horses and liveries, but black drivers and footmen, come down from the

palace, he observes that the ladies of the hareem are hardly veiled at all. A gauze "yashmak" only enhances the brightness of black eyes, and lends a delicacy to other features which without it they might want. But the carriages, the ladies themselves, the horses, the crowds of eunuchs, the outriders—who pays for them? It was impossible not to think of the number of stories everywhere afloat that year, of tradesmen ruined, of officials unpaid, of such small fry as teachers and governesses from Europe left to starve; stories which, it is to be feared, had only too much foundation in fact.

It was pleasant to turn away from this extravagance and observe the behaviour of the people close at hand. The women were of all classes. Ladies in black silk, orange-girls in blue cotton, negro nurses in white linen, sat along the wall or on the steps of the little mosque. The water-seller came up with a great full skin slung round his shoulders and two clinking cups in his hand, or a tall Arab with a tray of sweetmeats on his head, or an old wrinkled woman with a basket of beans, or a fine-looking girl with a long blue dress and a gold necklace carrying a bundle of sugar-canes and selling them at so much a foot. Every child has a large piece to suck; and a very moderate outlay in sugar-plums put us at once into favour with the mothers. One of them offered me her little girl very cheap, but would not part with her boy on any consideration. Another made tender

inquiries for my family at home, and asked the number of my wives and children.

At last a flourish of trumpets announces the approach of the procession. First come troops. Four regiments of brown or black soldiers in white uniforms march past, and again you think of the pockets of the bondholders, and, even sadder thought, of those thirty thousand taken away from their fields and their families to perish in the Balkans. Now the bugles cease, Arab music begins, and the dervish orders, each headed by its sheykh, with embroidered banners, go by chanting, while twenty-one guns from the fort above salute the coming Mahmal. Here and there an enthusiast howls wildly, waving his hands and rushing along through the crowd of his fellows, or lies half insensible from heat and excitement in their arms. At last the high red litter, glittering with gold embroidery, and rocking from side to side at each long step of the camel, comes in sight round the minaret of Sultan Hassan. It is greeted with wild cries, waving of drapery, and ejaculations of "Allah!" Every one starts up. There is a great roar of many voices, a great cloud of white dust, and you can hardly command your faculties sufficiently to look for the principal characters in the procession. There is the owner of the holy camel, wrapped in shawls and riding on a donkey. There is the so-called Sheykh of the Camel—a naked dervish with long black hair and a shining skin that glows in the hot sunbeams.

There, in gorgeous yellow and scarlet, is the old sheykh with the scourge, who warns intending pilgrims of the pains and trouble before them; and the official awakener, who calls late-sleeping pilgrims, and punishes the lazy. And among them are such great men as the Sheykh el Sadat, who is chief among the descendants of the Prophet in Egypt, and the Sheykh el Bekri, who is the head of all the orders of dervishes. But before all the lions are exhausted, the blinding midday heat, the noise, the dust, and especially that terrible smell which pervades all things Egyptian, have done their work, and we are glad to escape to the quiet of the hotel.

The interval of a day at least was necessary to brace our nerves for the great ceremonial of the Prophet's birthday. In Lane and other authors I had seen accounts of it. The pictures which showed the long row of bodies, and the horse pacing over them, were familiar among my childish recollections. Somehow, a *Doseh* had never appeared to my mind to be a reality. It was a traveller's tale, or at best a thing long ago abolished and forgotten. But, in truth, fanaticism among Muslims in Egypt was never stronger than at the present moment. Every second Arab in Cairo belongs to some religious order, and not one Doseh, but three at least, take place in the course of the year. At the festival of Sultan Hanafeh, and that of Tashtoosheh, the Sheykh of the Saidieh dervishes rides over the bodies of his devoted

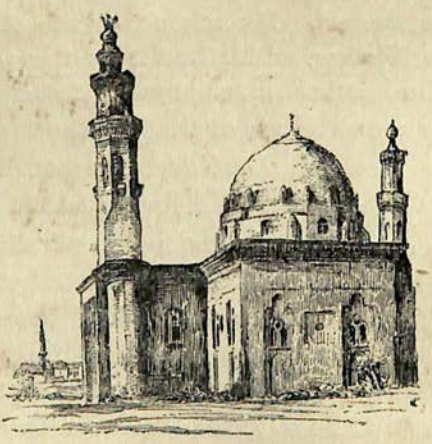
disciples, as well as on the great day of the Prophet. The horse on which he makes his fearful journey from the Hassaneyn to the Esbekeeyeh is used for no other purpose. For seven years at least no less sacred personage has mounted him than Ahmed el Kudari, the chief of the order.

As we waited under a tent in the full noontide heat, crowds of all classes and countries around us, carriages full of beautiful Circassians opposite, banners flying, drums beating, and policemen in blue walking up and down to keep the way clear, we found it hard to realise that we were assisting at a religious ceremony and not at a horse-race. The few historical and local particulars we could learn helped the truthfulness of our impressions; but, though one or two learned Europeans can give information, it is for the most part extremely difficult to obtain anything better than vague tradition from a native. On the ceremonies of his religion he is studiously reticent. Here on the spot, you may interrogate him in vain. He is altogether taken up with the enthusiasm of the occasion. To him the Doseh is a miracle, a great proof of the power of Allah, whose name must be exalted, and proves that the faithful are superior to the ordinary laws of nature. In spite of the excitement visible on every brown face, the crowd is perfectly orderly; and, what is more extraordinary, the hundreds of infidels present are never, at least openly, insulted. As the crowd became greater,

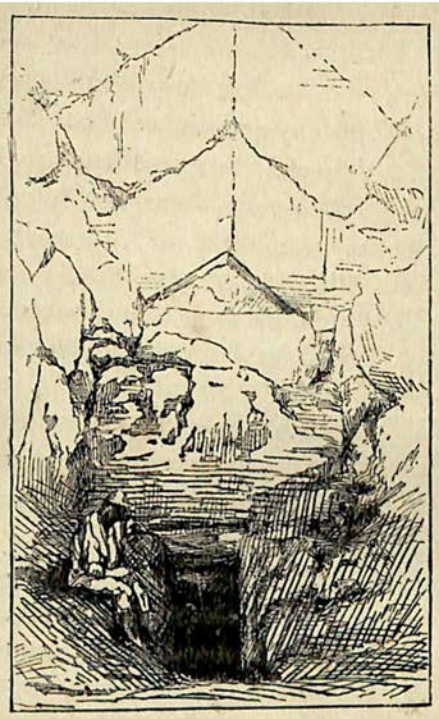
the noise more deafening, the sunshine more blinding, a sudden movement far away to the right announced the approach of the procession. The entrance to what you cannot help calling the racecourse is close to the English church. The open space formerly used has been built over, and the present one is surrounded by the new quarter and by European houses. At the Moulid e' Nebi this open space is covered with booths and tents as if for a fair. Every night during the festival the faithful assemble, each under his own religious chief in his own conventicle, and revival meetings are held, lasting far into the night. Foreigners are fond of visiting the show, and a dragoman or a donkey-boy who is a dervish, can generally place them where the religious exercises may be witnessed. Exercises they literally are. No Ranter, or Shaker, or Methodist of the wildest sect, ever set his hearers harder physical tasks. When the great day comes all are excited to the highest pitch, and, if necessary, *hasheesh* does the rest.

Fighting my way with difficulty to the edge of the living pavement, I saw some two hundred men lying close, side by side, all their bare feet turned one way, all their faces hidden in their folded arms. A man walked along on them, and jammed them closer and closer. Then, one after another, six men, bearing tall standards, trod heavily past. The road was not quite straight, the crowd pressed closer, and we could not see more than a few yards in either direction. By the

feet of the prostrate dervishes their best friends stood chanting a hymn, and fanning them with a regular motion. At length the sheykh appeared. He was preceded by a standard-bearer. The horse was led by two men. His gait was very unsteady, and the sheykh, a large dark man of middle age, appeared to be asleep or fainting in the saddle, and, though he was supported by two men, rocked heavily from side to side. The horse, a fine grey Arab, went very slowly, as if impressed with the solemnity of the occasion. They were past in a moment, but not before I had heard the sound of the horse's hoofs on the men's bodies, a hollow thump which haunted my ears all the rest of the day.



MOSQUE OF SULTAN HASSAN.



ENTRANCE OF THE GREAT PYRAMID.

CHAPTER V.

THE BOOLAK MUSEUM.

The Peculiarity of the Collection—M. Mariette's researches—The most Ancient Art in the World—Enumeration of the chief Examples of the Early Period—Conclusions as to Life and Manners under the Ancient Kings—A Discourse of Scarabs.

IT is a subject for constant regret that the Egyptian collections in European museums are wanting in the characteristic most likely to make a museum useful

to the student. At Boolak they know whence every piece came. They know where and how it was found. It follows that they can always at least approximate to its chronological position—not perhaps to its actual date, for dates, as we count them, do not apply to the early periods of Egyptian history.

Mariette Bey, the curator of the museum, has gone to work in a very simple and intelligible way as regards this difficulty. He has adopted, merely for experimental purposes, the chronology of the only authority that can in any way be called contemporary, and has provisionally used the narrative of Manetho, which at least gives the student a succession of names and events. I use the word provisionally because his system is like a working theory in astronomy; it squares, so far as his investigations have gone, with the testimony afforded by the ancient documentary evidence of contemporary inscriptions, while the others all require a certain allowance, a margin of doubt, a possibility or probability of error, which, although we may prefer one or another, render them at present less easy to use in the working of problems. The lists of Manetho have been adopted of necessity by most of the theoretical chronologists, but with modifications more or less serious. Some of these modifications may be reasonable, others are wholly untenable, and of most it is enough to say that further information would be necessary to a decided opinion. Meanwhile, for practical purposes, M.

Mariette Bey, whatever his private views may be, has placed his sole reliance on Manetho, as he stands, modified only by the monuments.

The work of Herr Brugsch has been to form a connected history from those monuments, a work he has admirably performed. M. Mariette has not trespassed on this ground, but has simply brought together and catalogued all the remains of ancient art he can find, or can get money enough to dig for. He looks upon the monuments as the "only trustworthy source of history:" and, preserving his judgment unwarped by what has been written in ancient or modern times, endeavours by straightforward investigations to learn the truth from them. There is this advantage about his method, that Egyptian history during by far the longest period, is like the great Egyptian river. The Nile has no affluents for the first twelve hundred miles from its mouth, and the history runs alone from the time of the first dynasty, which M. Mariette Bey provisionally places five thousand years B.C., to that of Abraham, a period of perhaps three thousand years.

There is probably no parallel, even in China or Japan, to this early course of Egyptian history. The student is troubled with no side issues. Before the world began for other nations there was life and intellectual activity at This. Where did it come from? Was Menes of the people of the land, or did he and the first dynasty which he founded

come from the scene of some still older civilisation to introduce order and law to the Nile valley? Before him there had reigned sixteen demigods, so Manetho says, and Menes would seem to have been the first king who claimed to be only a mortal. When he had sat on his throne for sixty-two years, he was killed by a hippopotamus. His successor, Athothis, reigned for fifty-seven years, and was a physician. There were after him six more kings of the first dynasty. I confess to a feeling of pleasure in lingering over these records. They are so far unproved by any evidence. M. Mariette has worked back to the third dynasty, but of the first he says that he is certain only of one thing, that Menes is a real historical personage. No monuments remain, or rather, none have been discovered, that can with certainty be attributed to him or his family. M. Mariette has long been seeking anxiously at Abydos, on the site of This, and has no doubt found a few evidences that Manetho is as much to be depended on here as later; but it is not until the reigns of the fourth dynasty that anything like historical succession of events can be illustrated from the monuments. The one great fact which we deduce from his researches is that the lists of Manetho, where they can be tested by external evidence, are in the main perfectly correct. Where they differ from authentic inscriptions the difference is easily accounted for, and the drift of all the recent

discoveries has been to confirm them in a manner which can only be called startling. When we read that at a period which he places seven or eight centuries before the Creation, according to our ordinary reckoning, Binothris of the second dynasty decided that women might hold the imperial government, or that Tosorthrus of the third dynasty built a stone house and greatly patronised writing, we feel sure that some historical event is indicated, perhaps obscurely, and cannot but hope M. Mariette may come upon evidence to confirm it, as he has come upon evidence to confirm statements of a later date but equal antecedent improbability.

When we visit the Boolak Museum, then, we find an arrangement, so far as anything can be arranged in the wretched building, which enables us to trace the history of Egypt and Egyptian art back step by step from the latest Roman bust to the earliest statue portrait. There is no flaw in the chain, though there are so many blanks in the chronology. It is perfectly continuous and unbroken; and when you apply to it a question which M. Mariette asks with respect to the pyramids, you arrive at a very definite but very startling conclusion. M. Mariette asks where are the signs of the infancy of Egyptian art? The further back we go the more complete it appears. The magnificent diorite statue of Chafra—once considered the oldest portrait in the world—has been superseded from its priority by the wooden figure from Sakkara. The

want of conventionality in this amazing portrait places it above the noble but stiff statue of Chafra. But the wooden man has himself been superseded by the oldest monuments yet discovered, which are still more life-like, still more unconventional, still more truly artistic than anything yet found of a later period.

In short, the further back you go, the better the style. It is evident the style grew up by degrees. It is the result of centuries of study and practice. The two life-like figures found at Maydoom were not modelled in the infancy of art.

Such is the question suggested by a visit to Boolak; and there only can the ancient arts be studied with trustworthy facts before us. It is hopeless just yet to expect any improvement at the British Museum. The theory of Sir Gardiner Wilkinson evidently was, that all the people whom he classed as "ancient Egyptians" lived much about the same time; and his system has been pursued in the mixture of the minor objects, while the larger are only recognised by their inscriptions, nothing being known about the places where the majority were found. Had the statues of Ra-hotep and Nefert been brought to England in this way, it is more than probable they would have been catalogued as Ptolemaic, possibly as Ethiopian, while it is quite certain that the fresco of the *Pasturing Geese* (see p. 209)—a picture contemporary with the statues—would have been considered Greco-Roman.

These marvellous statues are placed apart from the other objects belonging to what M. Mariette calls "*l'Ancien Empire*" in a chamber not so near the damp of the river's bank as that in which the rest of the very early remains are arranged. They are rather less than life-size, but otherwise absolutely life-like. After you have gazed into the depth of Nefert's eyes, you feel, in spite of their being made of crystal and marble, that you have personal acquaintance with her. The beautifully-fitting linen dress, the feet guiltless of shoes, the absence of all ornament except a necklace of emeralds and rubies, the neat "snood" which binds her hair—all, you are convinced, are as much portraits as the face itself. The figure is full of a quality of reality which, seeing it is almost all we have of the earliest art, is better for us than a more idealised style of work. It is impossible even to approximate to the age of this and the companion work. Lepsius gives B.C. 3122 as the probable date of the reign of Seneferoo; but as he makes that monarch the first king of the fourth dynasty, while most of the recent authorities place him toward the end of the third, these statues of the son and daughter-in-law of Seneferoo may be even older. But all chronology is guesswork before the twelfth dynasty—a fact but too often to be acknowledged in the present state of our information.

The companion statue is not so interesting, but even more life-like; and the hieroglyphics on the

seat, viewed as the earliest examples of the art of writing yet identified, possess an interest for me, I confess, out of all proportion to their subject.[1]

The assemblage of objects of the period of the early monarchy in its own *salle*—that of the third, fourth, fifth, and sixth dynasties—at the Boolak Museum, is the best that has ever been brought together. M. Mariette has made extensive searches through the grave-mounds of these periods at Gheezeh, Sakkara, Maydoom, and Abood. After the statues I have just mentioned, the wooden man and the statues—for there are nine of them, of different degrees of merit—of Chafra, the most interesting of these early monuments are in a room reserved for specimens of the same period. Among them is the heavy granite sarcophagus of Shoofoo-anch (the life of Shoofoo), which stands in the centre of the chamber. Apart from the value of a relic of so ancient a time, this great coffin has a double interest. The personage buried in it was attached to the court of the monarch, after whom he was called, as superintendent of the royal buildings. He must therefore have had a large share in the erection of the great pyramid itself, if indeed he did not actually design it. The epitaph states that he was a priest of Apis and of Isis. His tomb stood to the south-east of

[1] I have gone more at length into the meaning of this inscription in an article in the *Archæological Journal*, vol. xxxv. p. 126.

the great pyramid, and the sarcophagus itself offers us the most complete model of what one of these enormous mummy cases was under the early monarchy. The cover, vaulted in the centre, has on it an invocation to Anubis. The four sides are modelled from what was no doubt the form of the ordinary wooden houses of the period. In the centre is the doorway, and over it a round log as if for the suspension of a roller or curtain. All the old tombs have false doors of this kind evidently imitated from wooden constructions, and two very complete and large examples are in the same room. On the cross-bar the name of the deceased is written generally with nothing but his name and rank. Possibly in these old times the great men of Egypt had their names thus placed over the doors of their houses.

The representations, of which we hear so much, of agricultural and domestic scenes, are well illustrated here in a number of bas-reliefs arranged like pictures round the walls. The sculpture is very good, and by no means betrays that stiffness we are accustomed to connect with Egyptian work. We seldom see such pictures in European museums, and derive our ideas from copies and casts of the comparatively debased art of the time of the nineteenth and twentieth dynasties at Thebes. It will be well to keep these two periods, as remote from our time as they are from each other, carefully separate in our own minds.

Among the other treasures in this room is a small

sitting statue of an ancient gentleman whose name was Assa. It is not above three feet high, but delicately cut in limestone and coloured. Beside Assa his wife stands, dressed in white, her dress covered with spots, like what ladies now call "Swiss muslin." She places her arm round his neck. Her name is on the pedestal at her feet. She was a member of the royal family, and was called Athor-en-Kaoo. Her little boy stands between his parents, and bears like his mother the title of "royal cousin." His name is Tat-as-as-poo-er. Some Vandal, since this charming domestic group was in the Museum, has broken off the head of the child. A statue nearly equal in delicacy of execution is in the great room, but there the deceased is represented sitting by himself. Several groups of a similar antiquity, but not of such a delicate execution, are in the western chamber; and the visitor who desires to cultivate a knowledge of hieroglyphs cannot do better than commence work by spelling out the epitaphs in these the oldest inscriptions.

Among the most beautiful examples are some panels of wood. They are carved in delicate relief, the inscriptions relating to a royal scribe and "trusty cousin and councillor," who lived about the time of Shoofoo. His name, which is very clearly spelled out in a very archaic but beautiful form of hieroglyphic writing, seems to have been Hosy. The panels were inserted in as many of the false portals

of which I have already spoken as being in all these early tombs.

The finest stone portal is that of Sokar-ka-baoo. It was evidently erected by his wife, who is represented on the two outer wings or side posts. She has a remarkably ugly face, but is very fair, and on her cheeks are green marks, which some have accounted for on the supposition that they were an early way of denoting grief, and others that the green stain is caused by the oxidisation of a bronze plating over the eyes. Be this as it may, the mark only occurs on monuments of the highest antiquity. The lady's name seems naturally to have been too long for every-day use—Athor-nefer-hotep, and she had for household convenience a pet name —Tepes.

Behind a sitting statue of Chafra, one of the nine found in the tomb near the Sphinx, is another very old portal of the same character, but smaller. It is also from a tomb at Sakkara. Its interest lies chiefly in the fact that Shery, its occupant, served as priest for the temples attached to the pyramids of two very ancient kings, one of whom may be identified with the Sethenes of Manetho and the Senta of the table of Abood. The name is here spelt Sent. He was a king of the second dynasty. The other king's name is unknown in this form. It appears to read Per-hebsen, and may be the second title of a Pharaoh known in history by another name.

I have dwelt at some length on these vestiges of the earliest civilisation, both because of their intrinsic beauty and because they do not occur even as the greatest rarities in our European museums. They belong to a period so remote that it is perfectly futile to guess at the date. In the long perspective of ages such minute marks as years can hardly be perceived. These ancient people tell us little of themselves in their simple writing. Few grammatical forms appear. Vowels are almost wholly omitted. But what is wanting in words is made up for in pictures. Their daily life is brought before us; their families, their homes, their professions, their agriculture, their arts; and we can conjure up, when we know the climate which they enjoyed and the soil they cultivated, a very complete picture of what they were, and how they lived.

The chief thing that strikes us about them, as we read of them in these monuments, is the absence of any worship, almost of any mention of their gods. They are often attached to the service of a king who is spoken of as a divinity, and in many cases they are employed in perpetuating that service after his death. Occasionally a name betrays to us the existence of a god to whom one of them was specially devoted. Ptahsokari, Ptah, Athor, Isis, Anubis, Shoo, Ra, Osiris, are among the names that occur, but none of them very often. These gods and goddesses were reverenced, but which of them was thought the greatest,

whether they had any distinct idea of theology, whether they actually worshipped the king, or Apis, or the white bull, or the golden hawk, or only looked upon them as sacred representatives of God, we know not. The monuments are nearly or altogether silent. Of Osiris at this time we have but little contemporary evidence that he was looked upon as the judge of the dead. Anubis is addressed by Shoofoo-anch as the god of the under-world. But many of the monuments of which we have been speaking are much older than his time—how much older we know not—and in them there are no such allusions. Investigators are agreed that pictures or sculptures representing the gods are all but unknown before the time of the twelfth dynasty. I say "all but," as there is a conspicuous but more than doubtful case to the contrary in the tablet of the Sphinx. But with regard to their ordinary employments and daily life we have, as I have said, much evidence. They lived in timber houses, the windows of which were small in comparison with the wall space, and the doorways narrow. Provision was made everywhere for awnings and curtains to keep out the midday heat and the midnight cold. Their clothing was but scanty, but they were careful to cover the head, either with a kerchief or a wig. The women were very modestly clad, and wore more than a single garment—the outer one reaching nearly to the feet. The hair was plaited, and probably made up with artificial chignons and cushions, but was tied round the fore-

head by a simple riband. Tight-lacing had not been invented, nor the use of shoes.

In domestic life our ancient Egyptian was a family man. He loved his wife and his children intensely. The wife was sometimes the superior of her husband in rank, and retained her title, as in England we still distinguish peers' daughters who marry commoners. She had sometimes private property, and widows were often women of substance, and raised costly monuments to the memory of their lords.

This independence of women is often strongly brought out, and goes to confirm, were other proof wanting, the assertion of Manetho, that under a king of the second dynasty "it was decided that women might hold the imperial government." Yet the wife, even the wife of superior rank, is represented as treating her husband with respect. She usually stands by his side, or clasps his knees, but often too she also is seated, and her arm embraces his neck.

These ancient folk were keen sportsmen. In one picture a widow is represented as enjoying at a little distance the pleasures of the chase.[1] They shot, they hunted, they fished, they went on the Nile in pleasure boats, they tamed wild animals, and trained falcons.[2]

Manetho speaks first of the existence of warfare when he tells us "the Libyans revolted from the Egyptians; but, on account of an unexpected increase

[1] P. 208.

[2] This is probable, but not altogether certain.

of the moon, they surrendered themselves for fear." This was under the first king of the third dynasty; and we have evidence that under the eighth king there was something resembling a standing army. But up to this time had the valley been in peace? Had the civilisation, which is already so great when we first come upon its vestiges, been permitted to grow up amid profound quiet, unbroken by foreign invasions or internecine strife? It is impossible to say that there was never war, but there is much evidence that long periods of complete quietness nourished the security and wealth in which arts are perfected, and the strongest proof exists that one art at least must have been brought to a high degree of perfection without the interference of war.

This is the art of writing. The oldest inscriptions are those of Maydoom. Yet here we find not a complete alphabet, but two or three alphabets, and all the apparatus which in after ages became so like ordinary writing. But the signs used are signs of peace. Hieroglyhics and the cartouches of kings have been compared to heraldry, but there is this very important difference—for the shields, the lions rampant, the swords and spear-heads—the whole armoury of heraldry is warlike and the invention of people engaged in constant warfare. But what are the oldest hieroglyphic signs? The first letters of the first inscription I saw at Maydoom were as follows:—A sickle, a guitar, a plank, a smoothing-stone, a man's mouth, a ball, an

onion, a zigzag line, a necklace, a foot, a loop of cord containing a king's name which was spelled with a bent reed, a guitar, a human mouth, and a partridge. Such are the hieroglyphic signs of the times. They show, if we may argue from them at all, that they were invented by an agricultural and peaceful people.

Or we may take the ovals of the early kings in evidence. It is, of course, a question whether the names of Mena and Teta, and the other kings of the first dynasty, were ever actually written in their own day. Still, scarabs occur of such distinctly marked antiquity, that it has often been supposed they are the oldest "documents" in Egypt; and they are sometimes inscribed with the cartouches of kings of the early dynasties. Among the collection of scarabs at Boolak is one of Seneferoo. I have another, and the doubtful name of a still older king on a cylinder.

But a glance at the oldest cartouches as they were written at a later period serves our purpose almost as well. The name of Mena is spelt with a chess-board (Men), a zigzag line (N), and a pen or feather (A). That of his successor Teta consists of two smoothing-stones (T T), and a feather (A). That of Atoth has a feather (A), a stone (T), and a bulbous-plant (T H). Ata is spelt with the feather (A), the stone (T), and a bird (A). The next king has two harrows on his cartouche, which the learned read as Husapti.* It is not till we get to the eleventh king in the Table of

Abydos that anything that can by any means be called warlike occurs. Here we have a ram (Ba), a jar (N), an axe (Neter), and the zigzag N, as before. An axe is not necessarily warlike, but nothing more offensive or defensive is in this list till we come down to the eleventh dynasty.

Such were the people of that remote yet not wholly prehistoric time. I have avoided all mention of the question of race because the best authorities are not agreed about it, or rather, have come to no sufficiently clear judgment on the subject. But one thing, from a purely critical point of view, I may be permitted to say. There is a marked difference in the features of the great lord who is the king's friend and cousin, and who sits in the door of his dwelling, represented by the mouth of his tomb, to receive the homage and rents of his serfs, and those of the common people who attend his *levée* bringing him revenue in kind from his estates. There is a clear difference between the two classes as represented on these monuments; no one can for a moment mistake them. Chafra had a high Roman nose, so had his cousin Chafra-anch, so had Assa, so had a round dozen of the great men of the court of the fourth dynasty. Rahotep had a less prominent nasal organ, and the same may be said of Thy, but both were far from exhibiting the type of the common labourers who surrounded them. It seems to me, merely using my eyesight, that in this old time there was in Kam a dominant but benevolent

race of rulers and legislators, and an inferior, down-trodden subject race, light-hearted, perhaps acquiescing, as some African races do, in their own subjection, but of very distinct blood from their masters. All this, and more, on which it would be easy to enlarge, may be seen in these marvellous relics of an age so remote that we cannot date it; relics which show the signs of long and gradual improvement before they emerge at all into the light of our modern day.

It is rather strange to observe that no trustworthy guide, indeed, no guide at all, has been printed, so far as I am aware, to the choice and arrangement of a collection of scarabs. The Boolak Museum has several classified cases of them, and I strongly recommend them to the attention of visitors who wish to collect a few genuine specimens. Those which contain kings' names are labelled, but the rest are not even catalogued. Still it is well when you have made your first venture to take your purchases to the museum and compare them with examples of whose genuineness there can be no question.

Scarabs seem to have been cast by the mourners into the open grave, and to have also been strung with beads in the network which covered a mummy. It is probable that on the great anniversary of the dead, the All Souls' Day of ancient Egypt, visitors came provided with appropriately inscribed scarabs and deposited them in the tombs. Certain it is that immense numbers have been found. I do not know

whether I heard or read of 3000 being thus distributed in a single tomb.

Kings' scarabs were perhaps provided by or for the priest attached to the cult of each monarch's memory. We meet cartouches of great antiquity upon them. At the Boolak Museum, for example, the following kings of the old monarchy (dynasties 1—6) are represented:—Seneferoo and Nebuka (Mesochris), of the third dynasty; Menkaoora and Userkaf of the fourth; Ratatka, Oonas, and Raneferarka, of the fifth: and there are two examples of Papi, of the sixth dynasty. Dr. Grant, of Cairo, has very fine examples of Shoofoo and Chafra, and several other early kings.

In a few months I was able to obtain, by gift or purchase, examples bearing the ovals of Chafra, Rancfer . ., Oonas (three with two different spellings), Raenuser, Ramera, Raka . ., Ranebtaui, Sebekhotep V. (two), and many more of later kings, including one of Rameses in amethyst.

For some reason not very clearly made out, every second scarab offered to the collector bears the title of Thothmes III., Ramencheper. Perhaps this king, as Brugsch asserts, was held in special reverence after his death. Perhaps the representation of the beetle (cheper) was thought appropriate on a beetle, and in favour of this view it may be observed that the oval of Amenhotep II. (Ra-a-cheperoo), occurs nearly as often, and that the same "throne-name" was used by after kings.

At Thebes the next most common inscriptions on scarabs relate to Amenhotep III. At Goos, in the same region, I remember to have been offered one made of mother-of-emerald, bearing that king's name, Ra-ma-neb.

The gods most often mentioned are Amen and Ptah. The names sometimes occur alone, but more often with an addition. A large number of not very rare examples have the name or emblems of Osiris; and all, or almost all, the names of the gods are to be found. Sometimes, too, the inscription records the devotion of some town or place to a divinity, or the presentation of some land to a shrine—presumably by the deceased for whose burial rites the scarab is designed.

I may take at random a few examples. On one string I find first, a little delicately-finished coffee-coloured scarab bearing the words *Neferaneb*—"good Lord." Next the name *Oon-nefer*, a title of Osiris. Then the name of a "Royal scribe," on a green scarab of very good and probably very early workmanship. Then a little green stone bearing the words *Ra se*—"son of the Sun." Then a white scarab of a very common type, *Nefer-ma-neb*—the "good Lord of Justice." Then a blue highly enamelled example bearing the bee, or *seket*, emblematical of Egypt. Then a yellow one with the name *Amen-neb*, a blue one with a lotus flower; three, very small and delicately cut, with the words *suten-rech*—"cousin of the

King," and lastly—besides many which surpass my scholarship—a pale-green scarab with a sitting figure of Osiris on it and the words "good Lord."

Such are a few of the ordinary inscriptions, but the variety is almost infinite. Sometimes the people bring you many examples closely resembling each other, all made about the same time. This is probably caused by the opening of some tomb containing a great number of a single period. Sebek-hotep V. Ra-nefer-cha, is so far a rare scarab that it does not occur among those at Boolak; yet I was offered four examples in a week.

In spite of the number of old scarabs in existence a large and very thriving trade in imitations is carried on. Nothing but actual knowledge and comparison will enable the collector to distinguish the genuine from the imitations, and no hard and fast rules can be given to which exceptions may not be found. The oldest often look the freshest. The figures are cut to a uniform but generally very slight depth, and the form of the signs is very delicate. Scratchy-looking inscriptions are either forgeries or belong to a late period. The oldest scarabs are often made of white stone, but generally of earthenware glazed; often of the most beautiful blue. There is an old green which looks as if it had been painted on a white ground and half rubbed off. Sometimes the colour, generally a dark-blue, appears to be all through the paste. Ivory scarabs are rare and should never be passed, but a

number of forgeries in this material are in the market. Large granite scarabs seldom have inscriptions, but I have seen several on which an inscription had been very well copied by a modern hand. It is very hard to detect these frauds unless you have a smattering of hieroglyphic knowledge. Of course, if you have, you may be sure that when an inscription will not read it must be false.

The Luxor forgeries are the best, the hieroglyphics being very deceptively copied. The glaze, however, betrays itself, and the collector should look cautiously at a kind of tortoiseshell green, which is the nearest thing they can make there to the genuine turquoise. It is very seldom, too, that the inscription is cut uniformly.

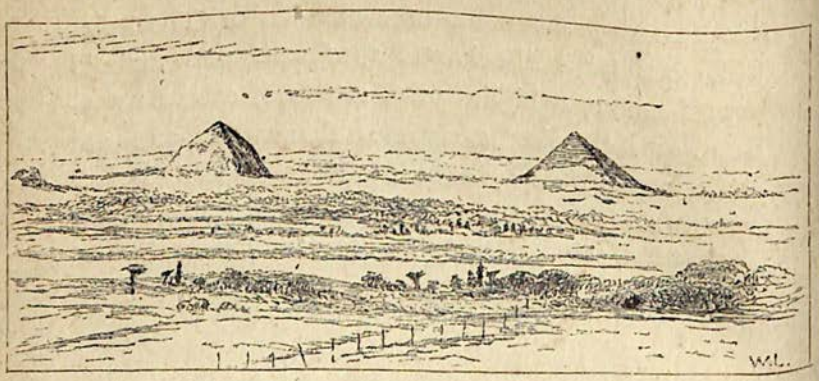
Another and large class of forged scarabs is known by its dirty-grey colour, and a splitty look in the glaze. They are chiefly offered for sale at Cairo; I have seen several hundreds in one shop in the bazaar, and have reason to believe that in many cases the dealers are themselves taken in.

A few ancient scarabs occur covered with gold—sometimes the gold is so thick as to form a perfect cast, and occasionally you may find this gold case alone.

The Arabs of the Pyramids do a great trade in genuine scarabs, which they import from other places, and sell on the spot. One franc is a sufficient price for an ordinary example uninscribed, or

only bearing the name of Amen-Ra or Thothmes III., but for well-coloured specimens and for old kings' names, a higher price is asked, even a napoleon, or £1, being sometimes demanded, and not unfrequently paid by enthusiastic collectors. Before you give so much you should borrow the scarab for a day and obtain warranty for its genuineness from a good judge.

PAVILION OF A MOSQUE.



DASHOOR.

CHAPTER VI.

THE PYRAMIDS AND THE SPHINX.

How English Tourists see the Pyramids—The Great Time-passage Theory—The True History of Pyramids—A List of Pyramids from the Papyrus—Their Identification—Pyramids now remaining—Their Comparative Heights—The Riddle of the Sphinx unsolved—The Question of the Tablet—Its Want of Authority—The Use of the Sphinx in Hieroglyphs—The Table of Thothmes—Description from Charlotte Brontë—An Irreverent Sightseer.

IT is only after repeated inspection that an adequate idea is obtained of the so-called Pyramid-field. Familiarity brings the most wonderful sights into their proper perspective. After a third or fourth visit, the bigness of the Pyramid of Shoofoo no longer weighs upon the mind, the height of the Pyramid of Chafra

no longer overshadows it; the whole platform begins to assume its true aspect. It is the Kensal Green of Memphis. The traveller who comes to Egypt with a preformed theory about the Great Pyramid and its purpose, and who canters out from Cairo on a glaring day, is dragged up to the top, hustled through passages of the diameter of a gas-pipe, alternately exposed to the brightest sunshine and the blackest darkness, who is next hurried down across the hot sand to stare at the Sphinx, and finally chased through the dust by a yelling donkey-boy the long seven miles back to Cairo, supposes he has thoroughly "done" the whole thing. He fondly imagines that in all his after-life he will be an authority on Pyramids, and will be capable, in the home circle, if not in a wider sphere, of giving a valuable opinion on the theory of Mr. Taylor and Mr. Smyth. One need not be surprised if he pronounces strongly in its favour. The performance he has gone through is calculated alike to fatigue his body and confuse his mind. His attention has been wholly concentrated on the Great Pyramid. Its height, its rugged stones, the vociferations of the Arab guides, the giddiness which the steep slope or the sun's rays induced when he was on the summit, the broken shin acquired in the exploration of the interior, the temporary blindness after he came out, the grand chorus of backsheesh which signalised his departure, and a thousand other impressions equally vivid, mingle admirably with the

ignorance or prejudice he brought out, and conduce to the formation of what he boasts is a cool and unwarped opinion. He has certainly seen something, superficially, of one Pyramid ; but what did he see of the nine or ten which are near it, of the fifty-nine which are further off? He has not read, supposing he could read, a single hieroglyph. He has not the vaguest knowledge of early Egyptian history. He is perfectly certain that the world was created B C. 4004, and believes that the odd four years were part of the original revelation. He has probably never heard of Lepsius, certainly never of Lieblein. He is not acquainted with the name of a single Pyramid, and has no more knowledge of the table of Sakkara, or the table of Abydos, than of the Turin papyrus. He considers it best to keep his mind free and unfettered, and is all the more positive as to what he imagines he does know. The man who, after a personal visit to the cemetery of Gheezeh, can continue in the nurture and admonition of those who believe in the Sacred Cubit, the Time-passage theory, the Meteorological theory, or any other tenet of the sect of which Mr. Smyth is presumably the prophet, must have been convinced on evidence very different from the evidence of the senses. I should be sorry to disturb a faith which is so wholly ethereal that it is independent of facts, and whose votaries are as much beyond the influence of argument as of plain proof.

Rightly understood, a Pyramid is neither more nor less than a cairn. It grew up from a cairn, and it was resolved into a cairn again. When it first emerges on the stage of history it is sufficiently rude and incomplete. If antiquaries are right in ascribing the Pyramid in steps at Sakkara to Vanephes, a king of the first dynasty, this is by far the oldest building in the world; but, in spite of some recent assertions to the effect that his name has been found in it, the point is more than doubtful. Vanephes lived at least as long before Shoofoo as William the Conqueror lived before Queen Anne. It is certainly recorded by Manetho that he built Pyramids; and, further, that they were situated at a place called Kochome, which M. Brugsch identifies with the northern part of the cemetery of Sakkara. Many heaps, more or less well defined, exist here, and any of them may be the Pyramids of Vanephes as well as the Pyramid in steps. There is an irreconcilable discrepancy between the two passages of Manetho in which, under the name of Vanephes, he speaks of the first Pyramids, and under Kaiechos, more than a century later, of the first setting-up of the sacred bulls, if this Pyramid was built, as has sometimes been supposed, for an Apis mausoleum. In fact, it differs so much, with its two entrances, its thirty chambers, but chiefly in its not facing the points of the compass, from all the seventy Pyramids found here and elsewhere, that it must be looked upon as

belonging to a wholly different class from the ordinary funeral monuments of kings. If the votaries of the Pyramid religion want a building which may perhaps not be a tomb, and which may have been built with a theological object, or as a record of faith for the benefit of posterity, let them turn to this remarkable and anomalous heap of stones. It will answer their purposes far better than one among a well-defined class of unquestionably sepulchral cairns. All the Pyramids except this one face the four cardinal points of the compass; all have their entrance on the north side; all contain provision for a single king's burial. Many are identified with the names of kings of whom it is recorded that they did build Pyramids in various places; and the Great Pyramid is, without any doubt which a reasonable man can entertain, the burial mound of one of a long line of kings who all erected similar mounds.

In the lists it is not even distinguished by a name differing in character from the others. If we identify it, as we may very safely do, with Shoofoo, the second king of the fourth dynasty, and therefore the third king, possibly the fourth, who built a Pyramid, or Pyramids, we find that it was only called the "Splendid," while to the Pyramid of Chafra is given the name of the "Great." To make more of it than a mausoleum, a royal "folly," involves making something at least of the Pyramids which succeeded it, and a great deal of those which preceded it. It happens to be the

broadest, if not the highest, of those in the same group; it is by far the most conspicuous, owing to its situation on a corner of the plateau and in advance of its companions, so that the visitor from Cairo recognises it—

"Broad based amid the fleeting sands,"

long before he sees any other. As we shall observe when we come to speak of Maydoom, the great building in stages which the Arabs name "Haram el Kedab" is even more imposing, no doubt on account of its lonely situation, and the absence of smaller monuments by which to measure it. Though it stands on no such elevated platform as that of Gheezeh, and though it rises but 122 feet above the heap of *débris* which surrounds it, yet it is only by actual measurement that one is convinced that it does not surpass, nay, does not equal, in dimensions at least, the Pyramid of Menkaoora, the third in size among the so-called Great Pyramids.

The tomb of Shoofoo has, therefore, an adventitious advantage enjoyed by few of its neighbours in being the first we see, as well as really the largest. To this fact, almost as much as to its actual size, we must attribute the effect it produces on the minds of people who have never seen a Pyramid before. In truth, to the superficial observer it appears to hide all other Pyramids, and it is not until a second or third visit that he perceives that it is at present only a foot

higher in actual masonry, and considerably lower in real height above the level of the river, than the adjoining Pyramid of Chafra. Had Chafra's Pyramid been at the edge of the platform, had it been the first seen by the visitor, and had the true relative proportions of the two been unknown, it may safely be questioned whether the Pyramid of Shoofoo would have become a subject of so much industrious, if futile, speculation. In the researches of early investigators this is very apparent. Champollion, for example, only examined one tomb in the whole necropolis, and Rosellini the same. All attention was engrossed by the monument of Shoofoo. It was reserved for Justus Lepsius to examine eighty tombs here, and to find the remains of no less than sixty-seven Pyramids.

The word "Pyramid" has been a matter of considerable questioning among antiquaries. A great authority derives it from the ancient Egyptian form *Abumer*, a great tomb, of which the Greeks transposed the syllables, just as they turned *Hor-em-Khoo*, the title of the Sphinx, into Armachis, and *Sestura* into Sesostris. This is more than plausible; but the name has also been derived from *Pi-Rama*, the mountain, and, as if to give Mr. Smyth the shadow of an excuse, from *puros*, wheat, and *metron*, a measure. So, too, *pur*, fire, and *puramis*, a pointed cake, have been suggested, and a hieroglyphic expression has been read, or attempted to be read, as *br—br*. We cannot

so far, however, say for certain whether the Egyptians of the ancient Empire had any general name for such buildings, though every king's tomb had its own title, and in the picture-writing a triangle represented, as determinative, all kinds of royal burial places, whether, like the grave of Oonas, they were merely square platforms, or, like the southernmost monument at Dashoor, were almost dome-shaped. Upwards of twenty of these titles are found in the printed list of Lieblein, the Norwegian antiquary. They all betray the unbounded admiration in which each king held his own last resting-place, and illustrate remarkably the real nature of the Egyptian faith in a life, not beyond, so much as actually in, the grave.

This is amply proved by the following list which gives nearly all the names known. It was originally compiled by the indefatigable Lieblein, but has been increased in late years:—

Ka-Kami, "the black bull;" Vanephes, 4th King of Dynasty i.
Cha, "the crown," Seneferoo, 8, iii.
Chut, "the splendid," or "the lights," Shoofoo, 2, iv.
Ur, "the great," Chafra, 4, iv.
Har, "the upper," Menkaoora, 5, iv.
Kebeh, "the fresh," or "refreshing," Asseskaf, 6, iv.
Ab-setoo, "the most pure place," Ooskaf, 1, v.
Cha-ba, "the rising of the soul," Sahoora, 2, v.
Ba, "the soul," Neferarkara, 3, v.
Men-setoo, "the most enduring place," Raenuser, 4, v.
Neter-setoo, "the most holy place," Menkaoohor, 5, v.
Nefer, "the lovely," Tatkara, 6, v.
Nefer-setoo, "the loveliest place," Oonas, 7, v.

Tat-setoo, "the most abiding place," Teta, 1, vi.
Baioo, "the souls," Ati, 2, vi.
Mennefer, "the fair place," Papi, 3, vi.
Cha-nefer, "the good rising," Merienra, 4, vi.
Men-anch, "the place of life," Neferkara, 5, vi.
Choo-setoo, "the most splendid place," Mentuhotep II., xi.
Cherp, "the homage," Amenoo, xi.
Ka-nefer, "great and lovely," Amenemhat I., 1, xii.
Cha, "the crown," Usertasen I., 2, xii.

The following have been identified :—the Pyramid of Seneferoo at Maydoom, those of Shoofoo, Chafra, Menkaoora, and Hentsen, a daughter of Shoofoo, at Gheezeh: those of Sahoora and Raenuser, at Abooseer; and the Mastábat el Faroon of Oonas; but it is known that the Pyramids of Vanephes and Menkaoohor were at Sakkara, while those of Amenemhat and Usertasen, the founders of the Labyrinth, must be identified with the two Pyramids of Illahoon and Howara.

Pyramids, or the remains of them, exist at or near a large number of villages which must nearly all be on some part of the site, or in the immediate suburbs, of Mennefer. The most northern are those of Aboo Roash, where one may be clearly made out. At Kafr are the so-called Pyramids of Gheezeh, nine in number, possibly ten. At Zowyet there is one: at Rigga a mere heap, at Abooseer, four, and some nearly obliterated remains; at Sakkara, nine clearly distinguishable. There are five at Dashoor, of which two are larger than the third Pyramid at Gheezeh.

There are two shapeless heaps, probably once Pyramids, at Lisht, and the brick Pyramids on the site of the Labyrinth are one at Illahoon, one at Howara, and two at Biahmoo. Besides these there is the Mastábat el Faroon between Sakkara and Dashoor, and the three-staged tomb of Seneferoo at Maydoom.

The following are the heights in feet of the principal Pyramids:—Gheezeh, Shoofoo, 460; Chafra, 447; Menkaoora, 203; Sakkara, Pyramid in steps, 190; Dashoor, 326 and 321; and Maydoom, 122, above the mound which surrounds its base. The original heights have been estimated as follows:—Shoofoo, 482 feet; Chafra, 454; Dashoor, 342 and 335; Menkaoora, 218; Sakkara, 200; and the now ruined pyramid of Abooseer, 228.

To resume: Seneferoo, it will have been seen, called his Pyramid "the Crown"; that of Asseskef is "Refreshment"; that of Papi, the "Lovely Place," a name identical with the name of Memphis itself. Teta, perhaps playing on his own name, called his Pyramid *Tat-setoo*, "the Most Abiding of Places." Others are the "Rising of the Soul," the "Most Holy Place," the "Good Rising," the "Beautiful," the "Great and Fair," the "Pure Place," the "Place of Rest"; while the monument, already mentioned, of Oonas, which the Arabs call the Mastábat el Pharoon, is described as the "Best Place"; and the unidentified tomb of Neferkara as the "Abode of Life." Such are the evidences, among others, that

to the men of that remote time—a time variously estimated as seven, six, and five thousand years ago—death was not looked upon with the horror which in later ages invested the grave with ideas of gloom, and recorded rather the despair of mourners than the rest of the departed.

Near each Pyramid was the temple consecrated to the worship, or at least the honour, of the sleeping divinity of the Pharaoh. The foundations are still visible of such temples near the Pyramids of Chafra, Menkaoora, and Raenuser. Even in the days of the Ptolemies the endowments which some of the oldest kings had conferred upon the priests of their shrines continued to enrich officials who, after the lapse of some four thousand years, perhaps enjoyed sinecures.

No writing or sculpture remains on any Pyramid. Herodotus tells us of the hieroglyphs on the Pyramid of Shoofoo. He curiously observes that they give the sum expended in supplying the workmen with onions and garlic; a statement on which I have ventured to hazard the conjecture, more than probable in itself, that the king's titles as lord of Upper and Lower Egypt were engraved with the lotus, the papyrus, and the bulbous plant, which in other places enter so largely into similar inscriptions.

Historically speaking, the Pyramids, apart from their antiquity, are of the highest interest. They represent a time of profound peace. They point to the existence of a dominant race, and of a population

which could be called on for unlimited labour. They tell us little of the finer arts, in sculpture and painting, which even then flourished, but much of skill in engineering, quarrying, building, as distinguished from architecture, and all that could be done by mere multitudes working together and bringing brute force to bear on stubborn materials. Whatever of higher art those early kings lavished on their "fair resting-places," whatever of portraiture and painting, of gold and jewels, of carving and ornament, of epitaphs and funeral odes they could command, were bestowed on the temple; the tomb itself was vast, solid, enduring, nor is it at all certain that the actual burial-place of Shoofoo or Chafra has been reached and rifled. Those who have spent most time in searching through the labyrinths of the interior are of opinion that the two great Pyramids are still but half explored. It may be that these old kings still

> "Lie in glory—
> Cased in cedar and shut in a sacred gloom;
> Swathed in linen and precious unguents old;
> Painted with cinnabar, and rich with gold.
> Silent they rest, in solemn salvatory;
> Sealed from the moth and the owl and the flitter mouse—
> Each with his name on his brow."

The coffin of Menkaoora is in the British Museum, and his name is on it, but there are doubts and difficulties with regard to the third Pyramid, on which I have no intention of touching here. There

is a possibility, at least, that it is not the coffin of Mycerinus, but that of another king—perhaps not a king, but a queen,

"The Rhodope, who built the Pyramid;"

who knows? And perhaps Menkaoora is yet sleeping in quiet "in his own house."

In the aftertime, when the kings of the twelfth dynasty fought against the northern strangers, when Aahmes led his people against the Shepherds, when Seti I. subdued the Hittites and his grandson pursued Israel, when fortresses and treasure cities, Pi-Tum and Rameses, had to be built on the border, we no longer hear of such great cairns as the Pyramids. The tombs in the Valley of the Kings at Thebes, great as they are, required rather skilled labour than mere force. No vast multitude was needed to decorate them in beaten gold and glorious red. The peaceful artist and his staff worked quietly in the dark corridors, while the people whose ancestors had heaped up the tombs of the older Pharaohs, now followed the later Pharaohs to the battle-field.

A smaller waste of human life than that by which Bonaparte ruined France would have built him a pyramid greater than Shoofoo's. About half the sum lavished by Ismail Pasha on plastered palaces would have made him a monument more enduring than Chafra's. But the Pyramid-builders had neither enemies abroad nor rivals at home.

A comparison of the different Pyramid-fields, and a little research into documentary evidence about them, bring out one fact very clearly in opposition to many recent theorists. The dynasties under which they were erected were successive, not contemporaneous. It was not as their rivals, but as their successors, that the kings of the fourth dynasty made their tombs beside those of the third, and the kings of the sixth dynasty beside those of the fifth. The last Amenemhat of the twelfth dynasty was probably descended from Seneferoo, possibly from Vanephes, with as much directness as Queen Victoria from our Angevin Kings, or from the early Athelings of Wessex.

Next in interest at Gheezeh to the Pyramids is the Sphinx. About it, too, a great deal of nonsense has been written; and I am afraid many people will think I am adding to it in giving my reasons for doubting the remote antiquity of the figure. I am convinced that in its present form it dates from the reign of one of the kings of the eighteenth dynasty—an origin old enough, but a third less than that of the Pyramids.

To different people the name of the Sphinx conveys very different impressions. To some it is the graceful Greek ornament, the lovely woman's face, the greyhound's body, the lion's claws. To others it suggests the myth of Œdipus, and, as a corollary, the reflection that people "gave up" very easy conundrums in those days. To others, again, the

Sphinx is part of the great "Timé-passage Theory," and a convincing proof that the Pyramids are a petrifaction of all the great truths of revealed religion. But to any one who has climbed the hill to the cemetery of Ghizeh, and walked across a slope of blazing sand to get under the shadow of the Sphinx for an instant's respite from the heat, it is a mighty fact, standing wholly by itself, unconnected with any other sphinx, not even the image of a god, but the god himself. The ancient Egyptians called him "neb," lord—a name applied generally to all the gods in their populous pantheon, but specially to the Sphinx alone. In his present condition he is a ball of stone rising on a neck some forty feet above the sand. The features he once had, features variously described as terrible, beautiful, hideous, expressionless, mocking, and so forth, are now chiefly to be made out by a process of the imagination, though red paint still marks the eyebrows, and there is the trace of a blush on the right cheek. At midday his shadow falls only under the deep chin, whose beard, long shorn by the Arabs, is now in the British Museum. As you creep under it you observe the stratification of the stone, and perceive that the Sphinx was never brought there, but grew where he is. The second Pyramid is immediately behind him and square with him, or nearly so, as if they had some connection one with the other. If you take the two into the same view, you will be puzzled by the nearness of the Pyramid.

which in the clear desert air seems close against the Sphinx. If Thothmes IV. made the Sphinx, it can have no connexion with the Pyramid; for Thothmes was of the eighteenth dynasty, and the Pyramid builders were of the fourth.

The discovery of a tablet purporting to be a record made by Shoofoo was supposed for a time to set the question at rest. It was found built into a wall near the most southern of the three small Pyramids, which are, so to speak, satellites to that of Shoofoo. It is rectangular and has a heavy border, the whole border and a kind of base being covered with hieroglyphs. It is almost impossible to read a considerable part of them, for, not only are they very indistinctly cut, but the stone itself is bad. The part within the border or frame contains pictures, very roughly executed, of a number of gods and goddesses, among them a Sphinx, and a little inscription is over each figure. Chem, Anubis, another dog-headed god, perhaps Tap-heroo of Ssoot, Horus, Thoth, several forms of Isis and Athor, Osiris, the bull Apis, Nepthys, Selk, the youthful Horus, the triumphant Horus, Ptah, Pasht, Toom, the setting sun, represented by his proper emblems, and finally the Sphinx, all are figured in this table, which, if it is contemporary, would be almost conclusive as to the worship of the ancients.

But is it contemporary—that is to say, was it written in the time of Shoofoo?

To this question I think but one answer can be returned—it is not. An expert in writing has no difficulty whatever in distinguishing between the pages of two mediæval manuscripts written, say, in the thirteenth and the fifteenth centuries. He cannot perhaps tell what the differences are, but he can have no hesitation in making his decision. It is just the same with hieroglyphics. No one who has seen the "Tomb of Numbers," with the long inscriptions commemorating the riches of Chafra-anch, or the tombs of Apa, of Ata, of Asseskef-anch, or of any other of the many containing writing which lie scattered so thickly over the Pyramid hill, can have a moment's hesitation in saying the "stela of the Sphinx" was not cut in the reign of Shoofoo, not even in the reigns of any of his successors down to the end of the Ancient Monarchy.

The question as to its age has been variously answered—one of the best authorities attributing it to the time of the twenty-sixth dynasty. I cannot but think it is older, as even a forger of that period, in making so long a list of gods, would not have omitted Amen.[1] The worship of Amen was introduced, in all probability, under the later kings of the eleventh dynasty.

What this stela says about the Sphinx has been often quoted, and may be found at some length in the Boolak Catalogue. "The place of the Sphinx of

[1] See chapter xix.

Hor-em-Khoo is to the south of the temple of Isis. . . . . The paintings of the god Hor-em-Khoo are conformed to the specifications."

On this M. Mariette makes the following curious remark — I quote again from the Catalogue:— "Whether the stone be contemporary with Cheops (which is admitted to be doubtful), or whether it belongs to a later age, it is *not the less certain* that Cheops restored a temple already existing," &c.

Herr Brugsch, in his *History*, makes a similar observation:—"Although the monument . . . is not contemporary with the time of Khufu (Shoofoo), and dates from a later epoch in the history of Egypt, *nevertheless* this witness of antiquity loses nothing of its historical value."

Now, to the ordinary mind the conclusion would be precisely the reverse. If the stone is not contemporary, and it certainly is not, it is altogether and all the more, and that much the more, uncertain that Cheops[1] restored a temple and the Sphinx.

It is of course possible that the inscription may be a copy of an older one, but that possibility does not give it authority. We all know what restorers have done in falsifying records in our own day. No one would think of arguing from a modern carving "in the style of the fourteenth century" as to a carving actually of the fourteenth century. And until we

[1] Herr Brugsch himself, in another part of his book, attributes the Sphinx to Chafra. *Geschichte Aegyptens* Leipzig, 1877, p. 395.

can find some portion, be it never so small, of the original inscription, this stela is absolutely without authority as contemporary evidence. A forged scarab is often an accurate copy of a genuine original. But unless you know of the existence of the genuine original, you would throw aside the most interesting inscription on the forgery.

It is almost useless to conjecture what the original of this stela was. Perhaps the copier, having a certain space to fill, put in all the gods and goddesses he knew of, and where Hor-em-Khoo was mentioned, added a picture of the Sphinx of his own mere motion. The picture of a Sphinx had become the hieroglyphic determinative of Hor-em-Khoo, when the stela was cut. There are plenty of theories which will account for the existence of this record, and for its peculiarities, but until we have some corroboration of its statements from other monuments, they must be received with caution, if not actually rejected.

So far, then, as we can tell, the Sphinx was in existence in the time of Thothmes IV., and perhaps earlier. The authority of the granite tablet between the fore-paws of the great figure is unquestionable: "The majesty of the God, Hor-em-Khoo, speaks with his own mouth as a father would speak with his son, while he says, Look at me, my beloved son; Thothmes, I am thy Father!"

The use of the figure of a Sphinx in hieroglyphic inscriptions is found for the first time, if we except the

forged stela, in the jewellery of Queen Aah-hotep in the Boolak Museum, where it occurs in connection with the cartouche of King Ahmes, the grandfather of Thothmes III. From that time on it is of common occurrence, and both on obelisks and on scarabs King Thothmes is represented as a Sphinx.

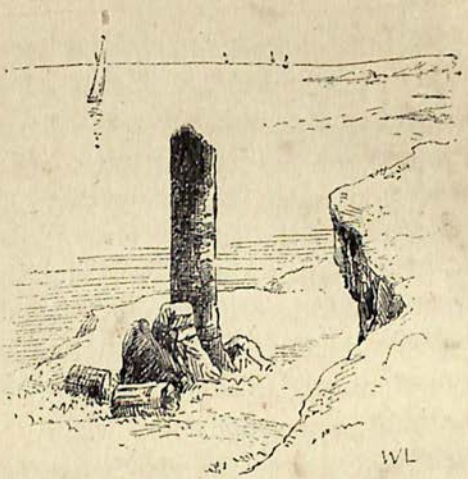
One consideration must be taken into the account in estimating the antiquity of the Sphinx. He is carved out of the natural rock, and stands on no pedestal, but springs directly out of the ground. If we endeavour to picture to ourselves the appearance of the plateau of the Pyramids before any tombs were placed upon it we can have little difficulty in the task. Many similar platforms exist all along the Nile in Lower Egypt. There is a broad expanse of black alluvial soil, dotted with occasional palms, and green here and there with corn or clover. Beyond the reach of the inundation rises a wall of stone, thirty, forty, perhaps fifty feet above the lower level. The top is flat, and covered with loose sand, which blows over on the fields below at every storm. Behind is yet another ridge of higher rocks, and a third step may be still further. On the intermediate level the Pyramids are placed. But if we follow the track of the first Pharaoh who came up from Memphis to find a suitable place for his tomb, threading his way by the side of the Nile, through the network of canals, towards a hollow in the long line of low cliffs, the first object which would meet his eye, standing up by itself

out of the sand-drift, half-way on the slope between the lower and the higher platforms, would be a great mass or column of rock some sixty or seventy feet in height, and backed by a low ridge running for a couple of hundred feet towards the face of the hill. Such isolated rocks are common in Egypt. One of them stands to the Pyramid of Dashoor just as the Sphinx stands to the Pyramid of Chafra. The rock may have already appeared to bear the semblance of a human face. But it could not be overlooked. The first rays of the morning sun would strike it, and the Sphinx, it is very possible, may have been rough hewn by the earliest occupiers of the tombs of the ancient Empire.

A great deal of sentimental rubbish has been written about the Father of Horror, as I have heard the Arabs call him ; but he is very impressive. It is impossible to think of him except as an individual, a person, not a block of stone. I remember at one of my visits a member of the party pulled out a note-book and read a passage from Charlotte Brontë's preface to her sister's novel, *Wuthering Heights*, where she speaks of her creation of the character of Heathfield in words which with slight change describe the maker of the Sphinx. His work was "hewn in a wild workshop, with simple tools out of simple materials." He found the block of sandstone in the solitary desert, and, "gazing thereon, he saw how from the crag might be elicited a head, savage, swart, sinister; a

form moulded with at least one element of grandeur —power. He wrought with a rude chisel and from no model but the vision of his meditations. With time and labour the crag took human shape; and there it stands, colossal, dark, and frowning, half statue, half rock; in the former sense, terrible and goblin-like, in the latter almost beautiful." But the concluding lines of Currer Bell's wonderful picture do not apply to the Sphinx; though its colouring is "of mellow gray," no moorland moss clothes it; no "heath, with blooming bells and balmy fragrance, grows faithfully close to the giant's foot"; an Arab sits astride on the ear and offers to chop a large piece out of the eyeball for you for half a franc, or a small piece for a piastre.

My sentiment received a rude shock another day. I remarked to an American friend that the Sphinx grew upon me. "Well," he replied, mockingly, "I'm glad it doesn't grow on me. It's too heavy."



THE LAST OF NICOPOLIS.

CHAPTER VII.

BABYLON.

The Chains of Egypt—Nicopolis, the Roman Camp at Ramleh—Turkish demolitions—El Kab—Dakkeh—Kasr e' Shemma—The Churches—The Walls—Comparison with the Walls of London.

IN a country which has been compared for its length without breadth to a serpent, the government which holds the neck controls it all. When all the world except Egypt was sunk in barbarism, the throat of the Nile Valley was at the southern end; the savages of Ethiopia were nearer and more dangerous than the savages of Syria, or Greece, or

Italy. In days so far gone by that their exact date is a matter of conjecture, or at best of approximation only, to secure the peace of the country it was needful to garrison Nubia. In less remote times the other end of the vast length must be guarded and protected. Accordingly, we find that when the strong-minded lady who raised the great obelisk of Karnac to the memory of her father Thothmes sought to hold the whole valley in subjection, she made her fortress beyond the First Cataract. When Cambyses, or one of his Persian successors, sought to hold the Delta, he placed his garrison at Fostat between Memphis and its sources of supply. When the Cæsars ruled Egypt from beyond the Mediterranean, they fortified their camp on the highest ground within reach of Alexandria. The chains of Greece were said by the last Philip to be Corinth and Chalcis and Demetrias; but the chains of Egypt were Nicopolis and Babloon and Dakkeh; yet of the three only the oldest is left.

Babloon was replaced under the Romans by a building of great antiquarian interest, though comparatively so modern; and of the camp at Ramleh it may be said, as of a camp nearer home which bore the same name, that within a very few years it has disappeared. The walls had seen, in all probability, the defeat of Anthony's last army. Augustus himself had encamped on the spot; and here, just seventy-seven years ago, Sir Ralph Abercromby

"fell in the arms of victory." In order to build one of his numerous and ephemeral palaces, the Khedive, in spite of many appeals, and in contempt of many promises, pulled away almost all that remained of the old walls, and suffered a tesselated pavement to fall to pieces and disappear through mere carelessness and neglect. Strange to say, like the fabled apple of Sodom, he never enjoyed it. A few days, or weeks, after it was finished, and before the Viceroy himself had been able to visit it, his little daughter died in the new palace, and, though on one or two occasions balls have been given there for Alexandrian folk, the Khedive has never slept a night in it. All that now remains of Nicopolis is a single column on a cliff overhanging the sea; though a few years ago a dozen were standing, it is easy to see that a few months hence even this one will have fallen.

The present dynasty, in an age of lath and plaster, will have left some great public works complete, and more begun; but it has not failed to mark its power by a large number of demolitions, of which this is only a specimen. Under Mehemet Ali the hall erected by Saladin in the citadel was removed, with its two-and-thirty columns of rose granite. In 1822 the temple of Elephantine was destroyed in order to build a palace for the Governor of Assouan with the materials. It need hardly be said that the palace was never built; but of the temple only a

single granite doorway is left. In Cairo itself, while a vast and hideous mosque of modern Greek design is gradually creeping up on one side of the street, in honour of the Sheykh who founded the Roofayeh order of Dervishes, and to mark the burial-place of the child that died at Ramleh; on the other the beautiful mosque of Sultan Hassan—a building contemporary with our Westminster Abbey, and in many respects comparable with it—is falling into irreparable decay. It must be allowed that, under the present ruler, the antiquities of Egypt have been made subjects of Government solicitude; and the researches of M. Mariette and his fellow-labourers have become possible. But, comparatively modern as the Roman and Arab remains appear, they are sometimes quite as interesting to the student as the older works, though so far they have excited little interest, and some of them are but seldom visited.

The old walls of El Kab, a fortress of the thirteenth dynasty, about fifty miles south of Luxor, the curious forts hereafter described,[1] at Arabat-el-Madfooneh, and the fort of Dakkeh, all present the same characteristics; but that of Dakkeh, both from its situation on the southern border, and its comparative state of preservation, is the most interesting. It is strangely like another type of military architecture with which we are familiar in England. The voyager who ascends beyond the First Cataract finds himself in

[1] See p. 285.

a narrow valley shut in by granite hills, and only sees here and there a space wide enough for cultivation. There are buildings of all ages and kinds, chiefly temples; and at intervals, where the sandstone ridges approach the Nile, he finds vast grottoes carved in the face of the cliff, the greatest of all being the farthest—namely, the temple of the Sun at Aboshek, better-known as Ipsambool. Amid this wealth of architectural remains, the best of them on the western bank, the castle opposite Dakkeh, on the eastern bank, is very often passed by unvisited. Yet it well repays a visit, though the visitor wishes in vain for some one competent to describe the defences as Mr. Clark would describe a Norman Keep in England. For, though it is built of crude brick—that is to say, of mud—and though it is seven hundred miles from the sea, and though it is one of the oldest buildings in the world, having been erected 2,500 years at least before the White Tower, yet to the eyes of an English traveller it resembles nothing in the world so much as the Keep of Rochester or of Guildford. There is the ditch, with scarp and counterscarp. There are square towers overlapping the corners. There are flat buttresses not reaching the top of the wall. There are gates with narrow walls and signs of drawbridges. There is a covered way down to the water's edge. We might be exploring a castle on the Thames or the Dee, except for the material of which it is built. The walls, some four-

teen feet thick at least, and still in places not less than forty in height, are all formed of great blocks of sun-dried mud, very like the sods of peat one sees in Scotland or Ireland. Here and there the impress of the maker's hand may be found, and you may lay your fingers into the very marks left by a man of flesh and blood, of nerves and muscles, of skin with a thousand delicate lines such as you see in your own palm, yet who lived and laboured and died more than three thousand years ago. Some of the marks are small, and must be those of a woman's hand; for female labour, by which to-day the new streets of Cairo are built, was, no doubt, the rule in Egypt under Hatasoo as it is under Ismael. It is very possible that the "prehistoric" Lake-dwellers whose hands were lately found impressed on pottery in Switzerland, did not live at so remote a period as these oppressed Nubians of three thousand years ago. Of the history of the fortress opposite Dakkeh, of its very name, we know nothing. Centuries before Joseph or Moses, centuries before the siege of Troy, tens of centuries before William the Norman, monarchs had castles built for them, and employed the labour of their subjects to forge and strengthen their own chains.

The ride to Kasr el Shama takes the sightseer through a labyrinth of small streets to the southern gate of Cairo, named after the lady Zeynab, or Zenobia, a grand-daughter of the Prophet, and thence

over immense heaps of rubbish, the ashes of Fostat, burnt in 1168, until the open country is reached. The mounds on the left are of amazing size. Nothing is more difficult to believe than that they are wholly artificial. Yet it cannot be doubted, and no digger into them has come to anything more solid than an occasional stone wall.

Expeditions to hunt in the mounds are sometimes made by the English residents—not to hunt wild beasts, or creeping things, but to search for old Arab beads and beautifully coloured fragments of pottery. Many interesting objects have been found in this way. You do not dig, but simply walk over the mound, and pick up what you find on the surface. Every wind lays bare a fresh stratum, every shower washes the dust from the glass or pottery; and you may search in the same place time after time, almost day after day, and always find something more. One hillock abounds in beautiful beads. Perhaps it marks the site of the bead bazaar of Fostat. As Fostat was burnt in the twelfth century, most of the things thus found date from beyond six hundred years ago.

Behind these mounds, and extending in a continuous belt along the foot of the mountain between it and Cairo, is the ancient Arab cemetery. It is interrupted where the approaches of the Citadel reach down to the city. Some of the tombs, especially those erected by the Mameluke kings, are well worthy of a visit; the burial-place of the present dynasty being

conspicuous among so many beautiful minarets and mosques by a dome of black iron set crooked on a whitewashed wall.

Keeping well to the right, we avoid these sepulchres, but pass the European burial-grounds; that in which many English travellers are laid is very well kept and shaded with a number of fine trees, especially funereal cypresses. The wall round it is high, and it has a strange—I had almost said a pre-Raphaelite—look, reminding one of the old Campo Santo pictures in Italy, or the conventional pictures of a walled garden in a manuscript of Chaucer or Froissart.

The heaps extend for miles in a southerly direction, and may mark the site of cities older by far than the tabernacles which Amer pitched on the spot in 638, and which supply a meaning for the Arabic name. This was Babylon, not indeed Babylon the Great, but the town which Cambyses is said to have founded, and whence, according to some, the Epistle of St. Peter was written. Whether Strabo, when he speaks of a Babylonian colony here, refers to the extradition of a number of families by the Persian king, or whether, as his words seem to imply, a much older settlement is described, cannot now be decided. In the twenty-sixth Dynasty there was a town here. It is curious, however, to note that other authors have spoken of the colony in very similar terms, and that it is sometimes ascribed to "Sesostris," or Rameses II., who is here said to have placed his captives from

Babylon, and sometimes to Semiramis. The most recent writer who has touched on the subject is Mr. Roland Michell, and in his volume on the Egyptian Calendar, to which I am already indebted, a conjecture is mentioned which would account for the modern name of the Roman fortress at least. Kasr el Shama—or, as it is pronounced, "esh Shemmah" —is, in English, the Castle of the Flame or Light, and may mark the site of a temple of fire-worshippers. Be this as it may—and no more plausible derivation has been suggested—there are no Persian remains now to be seen at Babloon, and the unobservant traveller might very easily pass by the Roman walls half buried in grey mounds, though they would well repay, what they have never yet received, a careful survey.

The western face now consists of a long wall of large stone blocks, under which a low entrance has been burrowed, leading into a very rabbit warren of miserable dwellings, Coptic churches, Moslem mosques, monasteries, synagogues, and bazaars, uniform only in dirt and darkness. To the ecclesiastical antiquary there is much worth seeing among the strange piles of mud and brick.

Of the remains the most interesting is a church built in the eighth century, where they show in the crypt a kind of cave in which the Holy Family is said to have lain concealed during the flight into Egypt. A plan of the church is in Baedecker, but the best

description is that contributed by Mr. Greville Chester to Murray's *Handbook*. Another church, appropriated to the members of the Greek communion, contains, far up stairs in one of the bastions, some of the most beautiful old tiles I have ever seen. There are also some very ancient ivory carvings and pictures, and a little stained glass. This church is dedicated to Sitt Mariam (St. Mary), and is locally called the Hanging Church, on account of its elevated position.

The Roman antiquary will feel inclined to pass by the door and to trace as best he can the circuit of the walls. They would be of the highest antiquity almost anywhere but in Egypt. Here they are among the most recent of architectural remains. Continuing along the outer wall, two well-defined semicircular bastions, once pierced with arched windows, or embrasures, recall similar buildings at York, in London, at Trèves—anywhere, in fact, where the military engineers of old Rome built their fortresses. There is no mistake about the banded masonry, the thin bricks, the hard mortar, or any other of many marks by which Roman work may be identified; though high up, with the wall for a foundation, a tall whitewashed dwelling looks over, and seems tottering to a fall. This western front is perhaps two hundred yards long, and ends with another semicircular tower facing south. This tower is very perfect to a height of perhaps twenty feet, and is the first of a series of

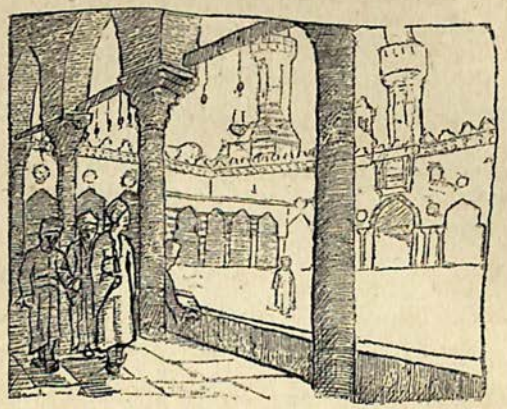
three, each some fifty feet in width, which range along the same side—the side, that is, which looked towards Memphis. If we climb the mound in front, the wide green plain with its palm-groves across the river stretches for miles over the site of the vast city, and the tombs of the inhabitants still cluster round the pyramids on the hill beyond. From the gate between two of the bastions, now sunk in ashes to the top of its pedimented archway, the soldiers of Cæsar watched the Nile and held the chief link in the chain which bound Egypt and Memphis to Rome. A few years ago there was still a trace of an eagle carved beside the arch, and everything is in a style wholly foreign, and different from the native Egyptian work.

To the English archæologist this Roman castle is peculiarly interesting. Just as our Royal Engineers build a barrack at Agra and one at Armagh on the same lines and in the same style, so the Romans had but one general pattern for their pretorium, whether it was situated at Colchester or Paris, on the Danube or on the Nile. Just such a fortress as this formed the kernel of old London. Its foundations, with the banded masonry and the semicircular bastions, were discovered when the soil of Cannon Street was upturned for the new station. Long before the wall was drawn round the outer ring of suburbs, before the British London had become the Roman Augusta, a fortress which must have closely

resembled this at the Egyptian Babylon crowned the hill on the eastern bank of the Walbrook, and commanded the little port at Dowgate below.[1]

[1] I have expounded my views on this subject in a paper printed in volume xxxiv. of the *Archæological Journal*, to which I must refer the antiquarian reader.

ALEXANDRIA FROM RAMLEH.



EL AZHAR.

CHAPTER VIII.

EDUCATION IN EGYPT.

An abortive scheme—Government Schools—Missions—The University of the East—College Life in Cairo—Ordinary Schools in Cairo—In Country Villages—Blind Guides—Coptic Schools—Towfik's Schools for Girls.

AMONG the other schemes by which Europeans were persuaded that Ismail Pasha was engaged in improving his people was a comprehensive proclamation establishing a magnificent system of free schools—magnificent, that is, on paper. Here and there, in the suburbs of Cairo, one comes upon a vast, empty, half-finished building, glaring across a waste of broken

stone. This is one of a series of "normal schools," begun with a grand flourish of trumpets, but never developed beyond the normal stage.

Yet in two directions education was pursued with some diligence. A year ago as many as thirteen hundred boys were being educated in Government schools. These boys were chiefly destined to serve in the army as officers, or in the post office, the telegraph office, as railway servants and as Government clerks. Mehemet Ali was their original founder. He started them for the purpose of improving the state of his army. To carry out his ambitious projects, he found that it was necessary to have officers of intelligence, trained doctors, able heads of the commissariat. He must train his soldiers by educating them. So successful was the college to which he sent his own sons that at one time it contained fifteen hundred students. But the Hatti Sherif of 1841 was the death-blow to education in Egypt for the time being. The schools rapidly deteriorated, for they had taken no hold upon the national life. When Abbas Pasha ascended the throne, he commanded a general examination of both pupils and masters to be held. So grossly ignorant did he find them, that he ordered all the schools to be at once closed. Ismail Pasha, however, perceiving that it was not alone for the sake of the army that it was desirable to organise some system of education, did all he could to encourage it; and its abolition, among other ill-judged economies of

Mr. Wilson, contributed as much as anything else to the fall of that "master of want of tact," as I once heard him called.

I visited this military school, and had opportunities on many occasions of conversing with native gentlemen educated in it.

There was a certain military and French tone about the school, but the boys were well taught, and always learned some language besides their own. They wore a uniform; the principal number were boarders, and the "externs" seem to have been paid to come. Half the pupils, when they left, entered Government service in some way or other. The experiment was tried of sending a considerable number of the most promising young men to finish their education in Europe; but the plan did not succeed so well as might have been hoped. They did not seem to have energy or enterprise to make use of their advantages. A young man would perhaps gain a good diploma in medicine at Paris, but on his return would never dream of setting up as a physician. On the contrary, he would be much disappointed if not presented to a lucrative Government situation.

Besides this Government school, in which a "liberal education" was afforded to the native youth, a similar training was—perhaps I may say, is—being given by missions in Cairo and various provincial towns. Miss Whateley's school in the Abbaseeyeh Road, the American school at Sioot, the Franciscan school at

Ekhmeem, are all of this kind, and about nine thousand children are brought up in them.

I remember at Belianeh, this year, two policemen speaking to me in very fair English. They asked to see a ring I was wearing, and were much interested when I explained to them that it bore a coat of arms, and had descended to me from my forefathers: all which they understood. They had been brought up at Sioot, if I remember aright, and had never been even to Cairo. Two postmasters, one a Greek Catholic, the other a Copt, were at Luxor last winter, and had been educated at the same institution. They both spoke and wrote English, and one of them had a smattering of German. In the Franciscan convent at Ekhmeem I found only one monk, but he was bringing up fifty children of all denominations, Jews, Turks, infidels, and heretics, and was teaching some of them French and Italian. They were a clean, happy-looking party; the front row consisting, if I remember right, of five Copts, three Moslems, two Greeks, and a Jew.

Besides these schools, and others like them, education is conducted in a very different fashion in the mosques. There are some fifteen thousand at El Azhar, the "university of the East," and other schools of this kind. It is not always easy to get into El Azhar, but the stranger in Cairo should by no means omit to make the attempt. The building is interesting, and the simplicity of primitive university life will

strike the visitor who remembers his own college life at home. There is a great court surrounded by cloisters, as at Oxford or Cambridge,—a court not very unlike Tom Quad in Christ Church. But it is not surrounded with residential chambers. The cloisters are the chambers: the open pavement under the shady side of the fountain, is the chambers: the many-pillared mosque itself affords sleeping room for hundreds of students, from all Mahometan countries. Very frequent among them is the green turban which denotes a descendant of the Prophet. The student works for work's sake only. The Khedive and his family have long ago swallowed up the endowments, and those of another great college in the mosque of Kalaoon, but he affords each matriculated student, in return, a piece of bread every day. There is water at the fountain: and one thinks involuntarily of the descendants of Eli: "Put me, I pray thee, into one of the priests' offices, that I may eat a piece of bread."

The *backsheesh* of five hundred sheep sent one day by the Viceroy on the occasion of a family rejoicing was therefore not unacceptable. The school is, in fact, a great free national university for the teaching of the theology of the Koran. There are few rules; there is no compulsory course of study; there is no roll-call or classification of students. Curiously enough, coffee and tobacco are forbidden within the walls: but, no doubt, the students rich enough to have rooms outside make up for the deprivation by an

extra allowance at home. With regard to the education, Dor Bey, the late Minister of Instruction, holds that the importance which is attached to the cultivation of a mere mechanical memory is fatal to the development of the intelligence of the pupils, and to progress in general. He says that the stupid scholar learns by rote without imbibing any ideas, and that the naturally clever boy is entirely crushed and suppressed by this system. The professors suffer as much as their pupils; and he tells of one who could repeat the whole of the Introduction of Porphyry to the works of Aristotle, yet remains convinced that the book itself was written by the great Sheikh Issagougi.

It is also well worth while to visit an ordinary school in Cairo. It is probably held either in a kind of open alcove adjoining a mosque, or in a vault underneath. You open a door in the street, and find a room about ten feet square. It is below the level of the road, and lofty for its size. A grated window, high up, gives a dim light; but a flood of sunshine comes in at the open door, and strikes full on the bright crimson robe of the *fakeeh* as he sits on his cushion in the corner. At one end stands the only piece of furniture in the room. It looks like a large harmonium done up in brown holland; but turns out to be a box containing the bones of a saint. In front of this curious piece of school furniture squat four-and-twenty little black and brown boys. One

or two are disguised as girls, to protect them from the evil eye. All have dirty faces, and several are suffering from ophthalmia. They sit in two rows, facing each other, and simultaneously rock their bodies violently backwards and forwards as they recite the alphabet, or that verse of the Koran which forms their day's task. The children shout at the top of their little cracked voices in a nasal tone far from musical. The noise they contrive to make is astounding, considering how small they are. If they cease their rocking and shrieking, even for a moment, the master brings down his long palm cane upon their shaven skulls, and they recommence with renewed energy, and an even more violent see-saw. The sentence repeated does not convey the slightest meaning to their minds, nor is any attempt made to explain it. Two or three older children are sitting beside the *fakeeh*, getting lessons in the formation of the Arabic characters. Their copy-book is a piece of bright tin, and they use a reed pen called a *kalam*. The ink bottle is a box containing a sponge saturated with some brown fluid. A long row of tiny slippers, of every form and colour, lies neatly arranged at the door; for the place where the bones of a saint are enshrined is holy ground, and no one may soil the clean matting of the floor with outside defilement. No register is kept of the pupils, or of their days of attendance. Indeed, although the *fakeeh* can repeat the whole of the Koran off book, it is highly probable

he would find some difficulty in counting up to the number of his scholars. His acquirements begin and end with a textual knowledge of the sacred book, and unfortunately the wishes of his pupils' parents with regard to the education of their children are bounded by the same narrow limits.

It is very different to inspect a country school. Whenever it was possible, on our voyage up the Nile in the beginning of 1877, one of the ladies of our party used to go and see the *fakeeh* of the village near which we anchored. I am ashamed to say I did not share her enthusiasm. I was ill at the time, and did not like the bad smells. But I went with her once or twice, and have since seen hundreds of village schools. Our early experience was often repeated. As soon as a stranger was seen coming, all the inhabitants turned out *en masse* to follow him about. They kicked up clouds of dust, brought thousands of flies, and altogether made themselves highly unpleasant. The visitor is jostled along through several mud lanes with holes on either side, covered by doors which seem to have been made by a prehistoric carpenter with neolithic implements. Nearly stifled, the sight-seer at last arrives at the village academy. It is perhaps a mud-hole without a door, and in it he finds three or four bright-eyed boys, a turkey-cock, and a few pigeons. The show pupil begins to read at the top of his voice the one piece of his lesson-book which he has managed to

acquire. The other pupils listen admiringly. He rocks backwards and forwards, as is the custom of the country; but when he becomes fully conscious how large and distinguished is his audience, the rapidity of his pendulum motion becomes alarming. It appears only a question of time how long it can continue before he breaks in two. There is, however, no appearance of any director to his studies, but a blind man sitting on a stone in the street turns out to be the village schoolmaster. The *fakeeh's* face beams with a proper pride in his establishment. He evidently finds nothing surprising in strangers from a far country coming to call on him. They have, no doubt, heard of his learning. He only regrets that several of his pupils are playing truant because of the great feast which is to be held the ensuing week. These schoolmasters are miserably paid, mostly in kind, for piastres are scarce; but they exercise considerable influence, and no marriage or family fête is complete without their presence. They sit, on such occasions, on an elevated bench at the entering in of the house, and recite chapters of the Koran, with their blind eyes turned up to heaven, and a look which reminds the Londoner irresistibly of the man who used to read the embossed Bible on Waterloo Bridge.

In better class Arab schools a little arithmetic is sometimes taught, but not always. Boys who wish to pursue that branch of their education, generally

learn from the public *gabâni*, a man whose business it is to weigh merchandise. A child whose father keeps a shop is taught by assisting in it. Geography is also neglected, which is fortunate, as nothing can be more ludicrous than the lessons when they are attempted. The teaching is of course entirely based upon the Koran, which upholds Mr. Hampden's views with regard to the shape of the earth. The children learn that it takes five hundred years of travelling to get round the mighty plain, whilst perhaps a few yards from the school door hangs one of Mr. Cook's placards offering to do the whole business in ninety days. It must be a little hard to explain all about the seven earths and the seven heavens, and the seven climates and the seven seas of light, with their curtains; so it may be just as well to leave it alone. The one important fact which the children retain is, that Mecca is the centre of the earth. The apparent want of discipline in all Egyptian schools partly arises from simple confusion. The children who are brought up to respect and obey their parents are really entirely under the control of the schoolmaster, and obey the slightest command without hesitation. It is the loud continuous hum of voices, and the constant going to and fro of the pupils, which make the schools appear such bear-gardens. Any one fresh from seeing an infant school in England would feel a sense of utter

bewilderment in entering one in Cairo. Everything is topsy-turvy. The children read and write from right to left, and even begin to learn their sole lesson-book, the Koran, backwards, because the latter chapters are easier and more important. The consequence is that, after a few visits to Arab schools, one cannot help a feeling of surprise when a child sneezes, or shows that he is changing his teeth at the same age as a little European. Government inspection used to be talked of for these institutions, and one of the Khedive's English apologists gave an elaborate account of it, as an accomplished fact, some years ago in a Scotch magazine—but I need hardly say even the Khedive cannot reform the Koran, and that nothing was ever really done.

Some of the Coptic schools are well worthy of a visit. The principal one in Cairo is exceedingly well attended. The boys look as if their intelligence was cultivated, and many of them read and speak either French or English with ease and a good accent. They seem to have a great interest in each other, and feel a genuine pride in seeing their companions show off their small accomplishments to strangers. The Copts take some pains to teach their girls, and have two fairly well managed schools at Cairo. The children are taught reading, writing, arithmetic, singing, and needlework. They evidently

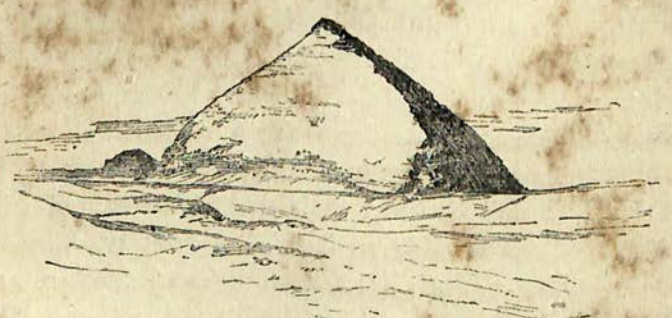
enjoy their lessons, and we may say, with Thackeray, that

> "He can't but smile who traces
> The smiles on those brown faces,
> And the pretty prattling graces
> Of these small heathens gay,"

except that the Copts are commonly Christians.

One of the things to be heard to the credit of Towfik Pasha, the Khedive's eldest son, is the perseverance with which he has supported a girls' school. There are now two such establishments, of course under Christian teachers, at Cairo. The larger of the two is in a fine old palace, which is admirably suited to the purpose on account of the number of large airy rooms it contains. There is an inner courtyard, and perfect ventilation and shelter from the summer sun. The dormitories are beautifully clean, and each child has her own bed. The kitchen, although savage-looking enough, would be a treasure in a modern London house, because all round there is a sort of double roof over the fireplaces which draws the smell up the chimneys. The cooking is by no means to be despised; nor does it discredit the handsome Nubian cooks, who show their white teeth with delight when their messes are tasted and approved. The children look clean, happy, diligent, and healthy. The punishments for bad conduct are bread and water, forfeiting holidays, and standing on a form. The bastinado seems to have disappeared

from nearly all the schools. One little Egyptian, a model of beauty and grace, was on her stool of repentance as my informant, an English lady, passed through the courtyard. Her head, covered with short curly hair, came out in high relief against the white-washed wall, and might have been the original of one of the statues in the Boulak Museum. The ugly European dress could not conceal the beauty of her lithe figure. Her small, delicately formed brown hands were clasped together, and seemed to shine on her white apron. She looked so appealingly out of her long, thickly-fringed eyes that it was impossible not to beg that she might be pardoned, particularly as she did not look in the least naughty. The directress of the school was a Syrian, and seemed a person of remarkable character. Her least word was law, and yet the children smiled when she spoke to them as if they loved her.



DASHOOR.

ROCK-CUT TOMB AT BENI HASSAN.

CHAPTER IX.

THE JOURNEY TO SIOOT.

The Steamer—Bedreshayn—A Difficulty—An English Beauty—An Egyptian Beauty—Corkscrews—The Children at the Stations—Maydoom—A Thirsty Journey—Beni Hassan.

WE left Cairo at eight by a steamer from the bridge of Boolak to Bedreshayn, on the morning of the 13th January, 1879. The railway had been broken by the inundation between the two places. The morning,

like most mornings in Egypt at this season, was lovely, and we commenced our journey in high spirits, and viewed with certain feelings of satisfaction the long train of porters who carried our luggage, our tents, and our *cuisine* on board. The whole deck was crowded with Arabs of various ranks, and we were politely invited to occupy one paddle-box. On the other was a celebrated London beauty, attended by her husband, maid, courier, and other satellites. The steamer only ran every second day; its departure was therefore a matter of some importance, and a large crowd attended to see us off.

Our own party consisted of an Englishman, a great collector of *anteekas*, who, having tried this way before, was the chief conductor of the party, and our principal dependence. We looked to him to decide every question as to the value of what we bought, the genuineness of every scarab, the place where our tent was to be pitched, the day's *menu*, the amount of pearl barley to be put into the soup, and the hour at which we must get up in the morning. He carried our common purse, as well as his own private purse, and a third from which he drew for the purchase of rings, scarabs, necklaces, and *anteekas* in general.

The second traveller was a Scottish lawyer, a sturdy, Saxon-looking man, of imperturbable temper, inquiring mind, and that general determination to enjoy himself, especially under disagreeable circumstances, which makes the best kind of traveller. He

enlivened our duller moments with recollections of three universities, and relieved the monotony of a noonday ride with a lucid exposition of procedure in hypothec, or a passionate defence of the Scots law of marriage.

The third member of our party came from Ireland; he came unwillingly, it may be said, for the benefit of his health, and, whether from illness, or in order to belie the traditions of his birthplace, he was the least lively of the three, and constituted himself the critic and grumbler in all times of doubt and difficulty. He refused to touch the luggage, except a small bag which contained his annotated *Murray*, which he used seldom to let out of his sight, and for which he used to ask before the needs of any one else could be attended to at camping time in the evening. A smattering of hieroglyphics and a devotion to the art of the early period made him intolerant of the universal taste of the Englishman; his serious views of life prevented his enjoying the happy temper of the Scotsman. We may, for convenience and distinction, call him the Antiquary.

At Bedreshayn the steamer stopped, and we entered the train, which consisted only of such carriages as had happened to be at the southern end of the line when the inundation cut off the continuity of the communication with Cairo. The beauty's courier was the only person, however, inclined to object to the accommodation, and when he had

positively refused to travel in the second-class carriage for which his ticket was taken, he was pushed by his mistress's husband into the carriage which already contained our party, plus a very large Arab gentleman whose own servant was in a third-class compartment, and came to the window at frequent intervals throughout the journey to regale his master with strong cheese, vegetables which smelt like a combination of garlic and onions, oranges, but above all, with copious libations of water. At intervals our companion covered his face, and recited his prayers, turning round on his seat so as to face Mecca. He was going, he said, to Minieh, where there would be a "sook" or fair the next day, and as Minieh was but a short way short of Sioot, we were destined to have his company nearly all day, so that when the courier was shunted in upon us we discovered that neither the portly form of the Englishman, the long legs of the Scot, nor the rheumatic joints of the Irishman would have room or range enough for comfort.

"If beauties must bring fat English couriers with them to Egypt they must put up with their company," we stated as an abstract proposition and general rule of the road for travellers. But not content with its promulgation, which quite satisfied the Scot, who cared only for the principle of the thing, and did not much mind whether his journey was made in comfort or not, his companions insisted on turning the unhappy man out, and he was eventually

allowed to make himself as small as possible, and share a remote corner of the beauty's carriage with the lady's maid."

By degrees everything was settled, and the train started. A grand pasha, going to his seat of government, was with a secretary in the adjoining and only remaining first-class compartment; a beautiful Circassian in black, with a very transparent veil, which rather enhanced than hid her alabaster complexion, and set off her melancholy eyes, was in the second-class compartment beyond, attended by a plump negro wearing the smallest of square-toed boots. Slavery is, of course, as every one knows, abolished and unlawful in Egypt under the beneficent rule of the present viceroy. It did not therefore appear how the grand pasha next door could be in possession of a Circassian slave, and not only of a Circassian slave, but of a negro eunuch. The inquiring mind of the Scot, who had never been in Egypt before, and who started with a full belief in what we used to be told about the Khedive by English newspapers and statesmen, was much exercised at the propinquity of two such complete contradictions to everything he had ever heard. Before long he found there were many stranger things in Egypt, and more untruth among our English sources of information than he had supposed possible.

The journey was long and trying; the heat insupportable, the dust suffocating, and the carriage

windows broken or altogether deficient. When the luncheon basket was produced, a little before the orthodox luncheon time, perhaps, the Englishman electrified his companions. "I have met with a serious loss," he cried, in a voice filled with despondency, "a serious loss, and one which will, I fear, hamper us all through our journey." Meanwhile he was searching into the bottom of a leather bag, two saddle-bags, a small box, a basket, various pockets situated in the lining of his waistcoat, and a fourth bag made of canvas.

Our sympathies were deeply excited; so was our curiosity. At last our friend found the word which, in the intensity of his anxiety and in the extent of his search, would not come to his lips at first:—

"The er—the corkscrew!" he exclaimed in a voice faltering through the deepest emotion. True it was, that in spite of his injunctions several days before at Cairo, we had both forgotten to bring pocket corkscrews, and had humbly to acknowledge the omission while we were still on the steamer. Consternation and repentance did not, however, prevent our suggesting that our friend should look in that coat pocket into which a corkscrew naturally goes, and into which we both averred we had seen him put it that morning.

There it lay, and there he would have found it had he tried at first.

Sand does not go well with sandwiches, and eating is carried on under difficulties when your tumbler

tumbles over your plate and trousers every time you fill it with claret; and when the chicken, though long, perhaps too long, dead, repeatedly leaves the dish on which you have deposited it, and takes refuge from your knife among the bags and boxes and dust under the seat.

Water is plenty, however, and refreshing. At every station little girls in blue cotton robes and hoods, with pretty bead necklaces round their brown throats, crowd to the window, crying "*Moia*, howaga; *moia*, howaga," with a whispered "backsheesh" at the end of the sentence. It is impossible not to look curiously at their faces and their necklaces. The collector accedes to a request that he would buy, and becomes, for a piastre ($2\frac{1}{2}d.$), the proud possessor of a singular string of the beads of all ages. The Scot meanwhile scans the countenances of the little crowd. One girl is the image of Nefert; another favours Cleopatra; a third must be directly descended from Queen Tya. The temptation to bestow backsheesh soon proves too strong, and the grumbler is at once provided with the texts of many a subsequent lecture on indiscriminate charity, the selfishness of charitable people, the comparative artistic merits of Egyptian, Arab, and Roman glass, and the carelessness of English scholars in hieroglyphs, who spell the name of the wife of Amenhotep III. after the incorrect fashion of the French.

We were now passing Maydoom, and the False

Pyramid was pronounced magnificent. Two of our party had visited it before, and the third became the victim of a discourse which occasionally took the form of a duet.

"Never shall I forget," said the Antiquary, "the sufferings I endured at Wasta Station."

"How was that?" asked the other two, innocently.

The Antiquary cleared his throat and began:—"It was in April last, and very hot, that I came down here by train, accompanied by an American artist, a merry little fellow. We brought Achmet the Jackal and his donkeys with us, and hired a guide in the station, taking care to inquire the hour of the returning train. They said it was due at three, but would probably not come in till four; and so we started.

"The morning ride across the harvest fields skirting the village was very pleasant. The pyramid was full in sight during a great part of the way, and looked so high, so strange, so fresh, that we kept constantly repeating, 'It is most imposing, more so than Gizeh, more so than Sakkara.' The village, or town rather, of Maydoom is about a mile from the pyramid by the bridle-path, but not more than half-a-mile as the crow flies. It appears to have been built on an ancient mound, part of which showed red bricks, but whether burnt bricks or bricks reddened by an accidental fire I could not tell.

"Maydoom, as a town, has an interest apart from anything now to be found in it. The name is

certainly the oldest local name now surviving in the world. This used to be said of Damascus, and I think also of Hebron. But Maydoom is mentioned on monuments of the third dynasty. It may, therefore, if we accept Mariette's chronology, date from before the middle of the fifth millennium B.C.; Abraham flourished, according to all accounts, in the third. M. Mariette, in his great book of photographs at Boulak, writes the name of the town Mer-toom, the first syllable of which may be Meri, and the name would seem to signify 'Beloved of Toom.' Toom, you know, was the sun-god worshipped at Heliopolis. This would make the name Maytoom."

"I think," said the Collector, "you may go on without further insistance on that point," for he dreaded anything which savoured of transliteration.

The Scot acquiescing, the Antiquary proceeded.

"The road turns a little to the left before you get to the pyramid, and so you approach it from the south, along a slope of sand, studded with green bushes. Here and there a patch of darker green appears, as if there had once been a series of ponds or lakes, and near one of them is a mound which seems to mark the site of a building, perhaps a temple. The pyramid stands on a high hill of disintegrated white limestone, which may conceal a rock. Its surface is covered with great blocks, some of them well squared and chiselled, others rough, as if broken. The mound is fully 100 feet high, and

the building which rises from it is perhaps 100 feet more."

"It looks more," said the Scot, putting his head out of the window.

"Yes, it is literally one of the most imposing buildings in the world," said the Collector.

The Antiquarian went on without heeding this flippant remark:—

"The southern face of the pyramid is very rich in colour. It is like a slice of double Gloucester cheese, quite shiny in places, and of very smooth masonry. The other sides are hardly so perfect, and on the north is a hole cut into the face about forty feet above the top of the mound, about ten feet square, but only showing the inner masonry to be perfect and regular. The mound below on the same side has the traces of a recent cutting, now filled with sand, made, I presume, by M. Mariette, or some other explorer, with a view to gaining an entrance, an object not yet attained; its entrance is not known, and has hitherto eluded investigation, but it is probably not far from the cutting. M. Mariette says it should be compared with the Mastabat-el Faroon, as well as with the pyramid of Rigga, a little to the north. It seems to be a great mastaba surmounted by two smaller ones, and is, therefore, neither a mastaba, as usually found, nor yet a pyramid. The Arabs always call it the 'Haram el Kadab,' or false pyramid, asserting that it is only a rock cased with masonry, and has no

interior chamber. This is incredible, and a rich 'find' may be expected when M. Mariette penetrates to a royal tomb."

"I do not understand a word you are saying," remarked the Scot, "but what I want to know is, who built it?"

The Antiquary was bursting with information, and after this encouragement went on for ten minutes at least without a pause:—

"There is every reason to believe that this strange building is the monument and still contains the body of a king who is described as the last, or last but one of the third dynasty. Seneferoo was a predecessor of Shoofoo, and his pyramid is older than the oldest at Gheezeh. The name of Seneferoo is found written in the tomb of Nefermat:—I looked at his monogram with a feeling akin to awe. It is unquestionably the oldest written name of a king in the world, yet it is easily decipherable, and shows that already the Egyptians were accustomed to the use of letters, and distinguished the names of their sovereigns by a cartouche. When we get to Abydos I will show you the same name in the table of the kings. It means, according to Brugsch, the completer, the finisher, the establisher, or the improver. He was also the first whose name is found written with a title, which title is 'the lord of justice.'"

"Are you sure he was not called Lord Chief Justice?" asked the Collector.

"Or Lord Justice Clark," suggested the Scot:

but the Antiquary had now well warmed to his subject, and was not to be interrupted with mere jokes.

"His pyramid is described, like the other pyramids, with a name or title of its own. It is *Cha*, the crown, the same word which forms the first syllable of the name of Chafra.

"But the most wonderful thing at Maydoom is not the pyramid. About three hundred yards to the north of it, across a hot slope of sand, we reached the first of a series of mounds containing tombs which have been opened and examined, and, I am sorry to add, almost entirely defaced. It would appear that the pyramid occupies the only rock, for these tombs are formed of crude brick, and only the sand and stony accumulations heaped over them from the surrounding desert hide their form, which must have been that of a long, low, flat-topped building of rectangular plan, covered on its sloping faces with white stucco, and having several entrances and small porches, and other auxiliary structures along the eastern face. It would almost seem as if when all was finished and the body of the deceased duly deposited in its last resting-place, among the rural and home scenes prepared in his lifetime, that the sand and stones were purposely heaped over it, and the beautiful carving, the great square stones from the quarry of Toora, the statues and the painting concealed from view under an artificial hillock. Another hillock stands a little further north-east.

"The first tomb we come to is that of Nefermat. He was a functionary of the court of Seneferoo. His name is clearly written above the door on the circular crossbeam with which, in imitation of the lintel and side-posts of a wooden doorway, the entrance is furnished. This circular door head, which occurs almost always in tombs of the ancient empire, and is often copied in granite as well as in limestone, may have been a roller on which to suspend a curtain. Nefermat is described as 'Suten rech,' or cousin of the king, a title very frequent under the old monarchy, and no doubt representing the fashion by which noblemen in England have since the reign of Henry IV. been addressed as 'cousins' of the sovereign.

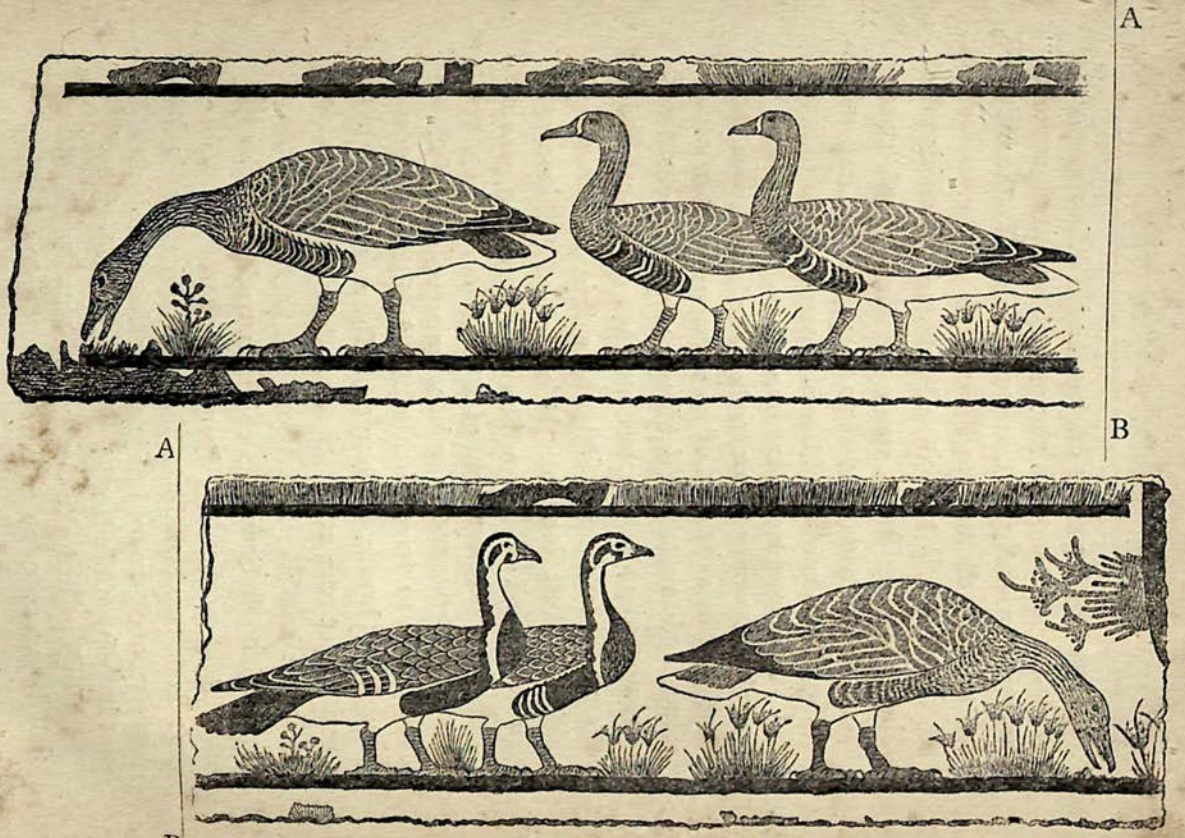
"Nefermat is represented with his wife Atet clasping his knees. Behind her on the right of the short entrance passage a procession of women is represented, bringing offerings from the estates of the deceased. Each of these estates is distinguished by its proper name, with a determinative. To the left of the doorway stand, one above the other, the three sons of the deceased. Their names are much defaced, and though I copied them I could not make them out afterwards.

"These figures were incised on the stone and the hollows filled with a kind of enamel, most of which has been picked out by mischievous visitors. Here and there a portion remains, which from the brilliancy and beauty of the effect makes us long for more.

The red, with which the men are coloured, is very hard, and has resisted the hands of marauders better than the yellow colour of the women. There are also sculptures in low relief, as in the better known tomb of Thy at Sakkara. Above the portrait of Nefermat himself are representations of his possessions, each with a number attached, among other things his falcons, which are on perches, four in a row.

"About twenty yards north, but in the same rectangular mound, is the tomb of Nefermat's wife, Atet. The building has been much defaced, but enough remains to make it very interesting. She evidently survived her husband, and perhaps succeeded him in his possessions. She is represented at the door in an act of adoration before the statue of Nefermat, and on the outer face, above the entrance, seated with her feet under her, in the modern Egyptian fashion, on a platform or high stool, while three fowlers bring her wild geese, carrying them by the necks, and she takes one in her hand. Exactly over the door a hexagonal net encloses a flock of the same birds, and on the left a fowler is in the act of drawing it over them. It was from this tomb that the marvellously life-like picture of a flock of geese pasturing was taken, which is now in the museum at Boulak.[1]

[1] By the kindness of Miss Lenox, the artist, who made a careful drawing of this picture, I am enabled to offer an engraving of it, which is the more valuable as no photograph can be taken from it.



THE OLDEST PICTURE IN THE WORLD.

"Some thirty yards further, and a little more to the east is another mound, also of sand and flints, covering a core of crude brick. It contains two double tombs, both faced with masonry.

"The first is that of Chent and Mara his wife. Chent, like Nefermat, was a functionary under Seneferoo, and a 'trusty cousin and councillor.' It is much defaced, and contains little of interest.

"The second tomb is almost altogether gone. It was about twenty yards further north, and apparently consisted, like the rest, of an entrance porch of carved stone, and a passage leading to interior chambers, ornamented with frescoed stucco and basreliefs of stone. Though so entirely dilapidated, this tomb is of the highest interest. It contained the statues of Ra-hotep and Nefert, which now form the greatest treasures of the museum of Boulak.

"Ra-hotep appears to have been the son of Seneferoo, and to have died before his father, while still young. His wife, the beautiful Nefert, seems to have died about the same time, and both were buried in same tomb. It is possible that their deaths may have left Seneferoo childless, and so led to the extinction of the third dynasty."

"Take care," said the Scot; "conjecture is not history; and you told us just now that Seneferoo may not have been the last king of the third dynasty."

"Yes," replied the Antiquary, secretly pleased to find his remarks so carefully listened to; "but for a

long time Seneferoo was identified with Soris, the first king of the fourth dynasty in Manetho's list; but the transliteration——"

"Look here," said the Collector, "if you are going not only into transliteration, but also into Manetho, I must retire to my own corner."

"Yes," said the Scot, "and you have not yet got to your sufferings at Wasta."

"True," said the Antiquary, humbly, "but first I must remind you of the statue of Nefert, which you saw beside that of Ra-hotep at Boulak. It is carved in the same proportions as his, being slightly smaller than life. She is seated like her husband, and wears a white tight-fitting and exceedingly graceful garment, slightly open in front at the throat; it only rises to the points of her shoulders, and leaves space for the display of an inner garment of which only the sleeves or suspenders are visible. She has no shoes, but her dress reaches to her ankles. Round her neck she wears a necklace of six circles of green and red enamel from which a row of emeralds and rubies depended. On her head is an elaborately plaited 'wig,' but possibly her own hair is intended to be represented, and round her forehead a ribbon or 'snood,' ornamented with roses and leaves, perhaps meant for embroidery."

"I remember," said the Scot.

"You are giving us too much millinery," criticised

the Collector. "What do you think of her face? Some people admire it immensely."

"So do I; judged even by a modern or a classical standard, it is remarkably lovely. Her mouth is full, but not too full, an incipient pout being changed almost into a smile. Its sweetness of expression baffles description. Her eyebrows and eyelashes are black and rather heavy, but they are lighted up by a clear grey eye, in which a merry twinkle seems to contend with depth of feeling almost amounting to sadness. In short, it is impossible not to feel that, in spite of rude workmanship in places, in spite of a somewhat coarse system of colour, in spite of the disguises which the tyranny of fashion, even in that remote age as now, loves to impose on natural beauty, you stand in the presence of a great original work, by the hand of a master devoted to his art. Although this is the earliest effort of portrait sculpture known to exist, it yields to no other statue of the kind which I have ever seen in either of the two great qualities of portraiture, life-likeness and expression. The artist who made the figure of Queen Elinor in Westminster Abbey could not have surpassed it in beauty, while for expression it is worthy of the school of Michael Angelo."[1]

[1] Some further details as to Maydoom were contributed to the thirty-fifth volume of the *Archæological Journal*, from which these notes are condensed.

"The Antiquary is quite sentimental about the lovely Nefert. Seeing she died about a thousand years before the Creation—according to Archbishop Ussher, at least—it seems a little absurd."

"Well," apologised the Antiquary, "I did feel sentimental, when I stood before the earliest specimen of high art, or any art, that the world has seen; and indeed, on that occasion, at her tomb, I rather overdid the thing. There were many fragments of white bone scattered about the mouth of the desecrated tomb. I took one of them up: 'Can this,' I asked myself, 'be a rib of the beautiful lady?' At this moment my American friend who had been sketching the pyramid, came up, and kicking some of the bones, stooped and picked up—what do you think?—the jaw-bone of an ass!"

"I must say it was rather hard on you. Some hyena had probably dragged a dead donkey there to eat at his leisure."

"Exactly. And I cannot help hoping that Nefert and her husband, if he was her husband, for it seems there is some doubt about it, still lie undisturbed in the inmost recesses of the tomb, and that one may apostrophise them as Miss Ingelow apostrophises her 'Dead Year'——"

"Stop a minute!" said the Collector; "is the quotation long?"

"No."

"Then go on."

"'Doth old Egypt wear her best
In the chambers of her rest?
Doth she take to her last bed
Beaten gold and glorious red?
Envy not, for thou wilt wear
In the dark a shroud as fair;
Golden with the sunny ray
Thou withdrawest from my day;
Wrought upon with colours fine
Stolen from this life of mine:
Like the dusty Libyan kings'"—

"That wouldn't apply to Beni Hassan, which is not in Libya, but on the east side of the river," said the Collector; "but it will do very well for what we may find when we get into Seneferoo's pyramid, and for Maydoom, in general."

"'Like the dusty Libyan kings
Lie with two wide open wings
On thy breast, as if to say,
On these wings hope flew away;
And so housed and thus adorned,
Not forgotten, but not scorned,
Let the dark for evermore
Close thee when I close the door;
And the dust for ever fall
In the creases of thy pall;
And no voice nor visit rude
Break thy sealéd solitude.'"

"Very fine," said the Scot, "and tolerably appropriate."

"Hearing poetry repeated," said the Collector,

"always makes me feel a creeping down my back. Tell us about the suffering you 'enjoyed' at Wasta station."

"Yes. We got there about 3.30. The train was not yet in, and the station was awfully hot. Still it was hotter outside, and we tried to sit on the floor of the hall where we could get a kind of draught. But the floor was hopping with fleas, and we soon rose and tried to find some shade outside. A moment on the platform was too much. You see, it just faces the south-west.

"Some little girls brought in a goolla of water, but I had seen whence they drew it, and could not bring myself even to wash my mouth with it. The American drank some, but very little, and said he could die of thirst if necessary, but he preferred not to be poisoned.

"An hour elapsed. Then another. The heat was greater than ever. Our tongues literally were like leather: perfectly dry. When we tried to talk our voices were hoarse, and our utterance thick, as if we had been drinking too much—instead of too little.

"At last the sun went down, quite suddenly, having kept his heat till the last moment. The artist was quite prostrate, and lay among the fleas upon the floor. I crept out and went along the platform further than I had been able to go while the sun was on it. Two men were sitting in front of a shed, playing dominoes. I went to them and found

they were at the door of a little Greek shop: I felt my heart beat with anxiety as I asked if the shopman could give me a glass of wine. He brought some odious sour and bitter stuff, and with it a glass of pure cold water. Oh! how good even the wine seemed! I had two 'goes,' and then rushed back to tell my American. Poor little fellow, he was almost insensible, and I could hardly get him roused to come with me. A glass of wine and one of water soon brought him round—and as he could talk modern Greek he soon made friends with the merchant, who came, he said, from Volo, where the Turks had just murdered his brother. As he talked he prepared us a savoury little supper, and we had hardly done when the second bell rang.

"The first bell—that which rings five minutes before a train is due—had sounded exactly four hours before."

The Antiquary had got so far in the story when he was interrupted summarily, if unconsciously, by a snore. The Scot had succumbed. It was twilight now, and cooler, and we were approaching the river again. On the opposite bank we could just make out the cliffs of Beni Hassan.

"It would be very easy," said the Collector, "to visit Beni Hassan from Cairo, by bringing a portable bed and sleeping in the railway station at Aboo Goorgas."

A long talk then ensued upon the marvels of Beni

Hassan, in which the Scot took no part. The Collector and the Antiquary had both visited the famous tombs.

Though their conversation on Beni Hassan only served to prolong their companion's slumbers, I may insert a summary of it here—the more so, because many travellers neglect to visit the grottoes on the way up the river, hoping on the way down to have more time; yet in truth, when you are within a few days' sail of Cairo, after perhaps three months' absence, you are very unwilling to stop even to see these wonderful tombs.

It is most important to remember their date. The twelfth dynasty reigned during a period of comparative—nay, absolute,—civilisation, between two long periods of confusion and barbarism. It was under them that the family of the Nomarch of Sah made these tombs. They were all made by the one family—though there are some 35 of them. The first is that of Amenemhat, who died in the thirty-fourth year of Osirtasen I. The second is that of his grandson Nehera, whose father, Noom Hotep, had married Bekt, the daughter of Amenemhat. This lady seems to have been of an energetic character, for she went to court and obtained from Amenemhat II., then in the nineteenth year of his reign, the governorship of the province her father had enjoyed. All this and more of the same sort, is inscribed in rapidly perishing characters on the walls of Nehera's tomb: and

though he honours his mother by narrating what she did for him with the king, he adds a line recording his veneration for his father, and his satisfaction at having been able to render his name illustrious.

In these tombs we find the names of more gods than in the tombs of the earlier dynasties, but as yet no representations of them. Amenemhat dedicates the north post of his door to Osiris of Abood: the south to Anubis of Ssoot: and within mention is made of Noom or Chnum of Ha-ver, and of Tater and Hor of Heben-nu. Thus we see that every god was more or less to be described as a local fetish.

The three figures seated at the back of the tomb are not gods, but represent Amenemhat and his two wives. His life is written on the inner side of the door. The name of the tomb itself was "As."

The greatest interest, of course, is excited by those tombs which have pillars closely resembling what was known some thousands of years later as Doric. The first caves you come to show the best examples of a style of which a contemporary example will be seen again at Karnac. Here they are cut out of the rock, and form entrances to deep chambers, of which the tomb of Amenemhat is the finest. This gentleman—for evidently he was a gentleman by birth, position, education, tastes, and attainments—made the most elaborate preparations for his own sepulture; and could we but feel sure that he was ever buried in his rock-cut monument, or that he was never dug

up again by some *anteeka*-seeking Arab, it would, perhaps, increase the pleasure with which we contemplate the decorations he has spent on wall and roof, and the delicate eye, for form as well as for colour, which enabled him in the reign of Osirtasen I., to anticipate the design which should, two thousand six hundred years at least later, be adopted for the chief feature of the most perfect building in the world. The two sixteen-sided columns which support the roof of the porch, and the four within the chamber, have all the characteristics of the Doric. They resemble almost exactly, in fact, the well-known columns of the temples at Pæstum, near Naples; they have their flutings and their abacus; the height is sixteen feet and the diameter five; the pillar duly tapers towards the top, and it grows out of the floor below without a base. There are people who assert that the Greek column was devised without any reference to these Egyptian prototypes, which would be harder to believe were it not that a little further on in another tomb we find a column which is, if possible, more beautiful than the Doric, and which was never imitated anywhere, although it also occurs at Karnac. The shafts are formed of slender reeds, coupled at intervals, and expanding a little above a fillet near the top, to contract once more just as the roof is touched. It is possible that the Egyptians made these graceful columns from actual examples in their own houses of canes supporting a wooden roof,

while the others imitated timber pillars, and that in Greece, where the reed is shaken by the wind, only the pillar which represented stability found full favour.

After all, the columns are only a part, and a small one, of the show at Beni Hassan. The pictures on the walls have been often described. They form the staple subject of illustrations in all the books on ancient Egypt. They have one great advantage, too, over what the traveller afterwards visits at Thebes; they may be seen in broad daylight, without any trouble in lighting candles or aluminum wire, and without any crawling on all fours through dark passages infested with Arabs and Arab parasites.

The Antiquary was enlarging on the strange fact that until very lately our writers on Egypt never perceived that these wall-paintings belong to a totally different style of art from either the works of the early monarchy, before the sixth dynasty, or those of the so-called Middle Monarchy of the eighteenth dynasty—when the announcement was made that Sioot was in sight.

There is no moonlight, and though the mountain beyond is very plain, the minarets are hardly made out, and there is no certainty except about the flashings of a few lights and the gradually increasing smell of Arab fuel.

Once launched in the dark upon the winding way which leads from the station to the town a feeling of depression, discomfort, and intense fatigue took

possession of us. We did not talk or laugh, but silently followed our conductor along the silent road under over-arching boughs of black sont, and looked cautiously on either hand at the black water of the canals. At length by the starlight and a lantern dimly burning, we descry the picturesque arch which forms the principal entrance to the town, and passing through the court under the great trees and over the bridge, we thread our way among the sleepers in the market-place, avoid the snarling dogs at every corner, and reach at least what looks like a shop with the shutters up.

After some knocking we are admitted to a steep and sudden stair which conducts us to a lofty and bare room with many unglazed windows. Here we shiver for a few moments while repeated orders are addressed in Italian and Arabic mixed, to an invisible "Husseyn," who proves at length as he appears bearing a candle, to be a short and ill-favoured, but obliging and attentive Arab in a single blue garment. He helps our men to bring in a folding bed which is speedily set up in the middle of the room. Beds already exist in adjoining rooms, and within half an hour we are all asleep, and our first day's journey is over.

THE CAUSEWAY.

CHAPTER X.

SIOOT.

The Town—The Mountain.—The Tombs—The Caravan Started—The Arabs—The Copts—Our First Camping Place.

IN the morning, for various reasons, among which sufficient rest was not one, we were all early astir. Before we were dressed and a partial wash attempted, Hassan came to tell us breakfast was ready. The announcement was received with some surprise: but incredulity gave way to pleasure as we found a table in another chamber loaded with the good things of Egypt—eggs, milk, coffee, and hot bread; to be supplemented presently by a great pot of "sherba" or soup, and a small pot of strong "chay" or tea.

While breakfast went on our plans for the day were settled. The first thing to do, said the Collector, was to get up the tent, the next, to get up the mountain. The site of our encampment must first be settled, and Hassan, the intelligent donkey "boy," or rather man, whom we have brought with us from Cairo, tells us he knows of a place which will be sure to please "my gentlemen," as, translating literally an Arab phrase, he calls us.

Once arrived on the camping ground the tent rises with amazing celerity. It is in the middle of a clover field between town and mountain, with a canal winding like a river round two sides, and on the other a long road, in part an embankment, in part an arched viaduct, which attested the engineering skill of the ancient Arabs who were established here before ever Cairo was built.

The face of the mountain, everywhere pitted with the tombs of the ancient Ssoot, the Greek Lycopolis, was very inviting from the tent door; and in the afternoon we found ourselves on donkeys at its foot. The climb to the first tomb was soon accomplished, but not before we had been startled by the apparition of a gaunt grey wolf which, stalking out of a cavern, caught sight of us, and scampered off across the rocks with the rolling gallop of which Russian and American travellers have told us. A wolf at Lycopolis, though it is the "correct thing," is but seldom seen; and all over the mountain we found pitfalls,

mud huts, traps and snares, intended by the Arab hunters for the capture of the animal.

The tombs at Sioot have been often described, but not, I think, very accurately, except by Brugsch, in his *Reiseberichte aus Aegypten.*

The principal grotto is of enormous size. It commemorates a governor of Ssoot under the thirteenth dynasty whose name was Hap-Tefa. It must have been a magnificent excavation at one time. The colour is now all gone, and the arched roof, once blue, powdered with stars, is now almost black. The people call it "Stabl Antar," after a hero of Arab romance, who figures also in the name of a cave at the other side of the river. A second Hap-Tefa, who bears the sounding titles of "greatest among the great, wisest among the wise, pious and a benefactor, learned and a reader of rolls," is buried in the second great cavern a little higher up. He was also "nomarch" of Ssoot. In a third tomb, that of Tef-ab, son of Cheti, Brugsch found an inscription naming King Ra-ka-meri, who had commanded the deceased to rebuild the temple of Tap-heru, the wolf-headed god of Lycopolis, and setting forth that he accomplished his task to the satisfaction of the god; that under him Ssoot was prosperous; that there was neither strife, nor brawl, nor violence; that the child rested by its mother, and the poor man with his wife.

This Ra-ka-meri, or Ka-meri-ra, has left no other trace of his existence than this inscription, made

probably by the deceased Tef-ab, the son of Cheti, in his own honour. M. Brugsch is inclined to identify him with Mer-ka-ra, the forty-fifth king, or else with a Ka .... ra, whose name is partly effaced, and who was the eighty-second king of the thirteenth dynasty. There were some ninety kings or more, so great was the interval, the dark age, between the glories of the ancient monarchy and those of the middle period. But it was impossible to stay long underground on such a day. Even the Antiquary took more interest in the view of the town, the river, the green fields, and the vast shadow creeping slowly across the plain as the sun descended behind us.

Every effort had been made by Hassan and the cook for our reception on our return to the tent, but to their politely expressed disappointment and probably suppressed relief, the Collector had met an old school-fellow in the market-place and we had all promised to dine with him in his dahabeeah, which was moored near the railway station.

That night was our first in the tent. In spite of a somewhat uneven floor, and an insufficient supply of mats to cover the deep cracks in the rich black earth, we were extremely comfortable, and the voice of the experienced Collector would have little effect in rousing us at daybreak had he not added to his call for a basin of water, a command to our attendants to take down the tent.

Fortunately this was a work of some minutes, and

we had time to enjoy the view. The Scot muttered disconnected lines from the 23rd Psalm, and the Irishman quoted Watts. There were pastures sweet, the quiet waters by, and fields beyond the swelling flood all dressed in living green. It was here, as the Collector reminded us, according to a Coptic legend, the Holy Family abode, during their exile in Egypt. Turning round we found a table prepared before us: and the meal was increased by delicacies designed for the dinner of yesterday. The morning cold was intense, and though we sat at our table under the full rays of the rising sun, a heavy ulster or inverness, and a warm shawl over the tarboosh, were by no means enough.

A long discussion had been held the night before with the Sheykh of the donkey boys of Sioot. The gentleman who bore this proud title had brought with him, and presented to us, the chief donkey owner, and negotiations after an hour's bargaining were at length completed for the hire of eight donkeys to come with us to Luxor. A mule was at first proposed, or even a camel, for the tent, but two donkeys were held by the faculty to be preferable, and we had cause afterwards to be glad.

Breakfast was but half over as we saw our cavalcade descending from the town into the field. Eight donkeys, of all shapes and sizes and colours, were led, or rather chased, by Malek, Laessay, Mohammed,

Suleyman and Metwally, five stalwart "boys" of ages ranging from Suleyman's eighteen years to Laessay's forty. Malek was our "sheykh," and as he had personally conducted our Collector two years ago, he was received as an old friend and presented with a turban.

"Get up, my gentleman," said Hassan, persuasively, as he led towards the Antiquary a small red donkey on which he had ridden the day before. He had expressed satisfaction with its pace, and the careful Hassan had noted its merits, and selected it for one of our complement of eight. It is not always easy to mount a donkey, especially when he is laden with saddle-bags, and the Antiquary had nearly measured his length on the ground as his donkey swerving round began to bray loudly at another passing by on the bank.

After five minutes of the most confusing vociferations, in which Hassan, Mustafa the cook, and all the five boys took part at the tops of their voices, and in which the red donkey joined a second time in most sonorous tones, we got under way, and rode along a bridle path through fields of beans, already, as the sun warmed the air, giving forth the most delicious perfume. It would be impossible to convey the slightest idea of the beauty of the scene. Our course was nearly due south. Behind us were the many minarets of Sioot. On the right the mountain we had climbed yesterday caught and reflected

the rays of the sun, which, rising in full glory on the left, precluded any observations in that direction. In front the green fields seemed interminable. A delicate veil of blue mist hovered here and there in the distance, and the sparkling of dew drops constantly caught the eye in the foreground. The mountain ended, or seemed to end, in a bold bluff four or five miles off, and the mountains at the other side of the river, were dimly visible through the haze.

In one particular the scene was not as picturesque as it might have been a little further north. The people evidently belonged to a different tribe or race from the fellah of Lower Egypt. The troops of laughing girls in blue became fewer and fewer as we advanced. There was an increasing shyness among women and men alike. A great brown capote hid every feature of most of those we passed; and even the children in the fields often turned their backs to us when we looked at them. A little further south the Howara Arabs colonised the country at an early period, and it is probable, or at least possible, that these shy, dark-coated, stern-looking people were of very different descent from the peasantry of the lower country. Near and in the larger towns, we found different manners; but in such remote places as Arabat and Marashteh we stayed a whole day and night in a village without seeing a single female form except at a distance.

The few faces of women we did catch a glimpse of

had none of the feature or vivacity which in the fellah of Lower Egypt is often so good a substitute for beauty. On the contrary a dark skin, high cheek bones, small dull eyes, a flat nose, and many similar characteristics went to convince us that these were not the people from whom Tya or Nefert sprung, and in this particular, at least, to make us wish for some of our merry little friends of the railway stations further north.

The men, though often coarse-featured, were fine stalwart fellows, and had at least the remains of an independent expression, not yet wholly obliterated by the oppressions and extortions of a dishonest government. Not long ago they lived under their own princes, and the Howara district, it is said, could send more than 30,000 horsemen into the field. Now, after half a century of Turkish rule, horses are few and far between: the wealth is driven into the hands of the Copts and of those fortunate individuals who, by becoming consular agents to some European power, have been able to obtain protection against robbery under the name of taxation. The country Arab grows poorer every year. He is not encouraged to thrift. Far from it; he knows but too well that he is safest when poorest, and unconsciously applies to his own case the proverb that you cannot take the breeks off a Highlander. Breeks, indeed, he has none, and an expression which is rightly or wrongly attributed to his present oppressor, that he would find it

impossible to govern Egypt if the fellah possessed more than one shirt, has not only been reported throughout the length and breadth of the land, but, after years of hopeless struggle, is now being everywhere acted upon :—

"Cantabit vacuus coram latrone viator:"

for *latro* read Turk, and for *viator*, Arab.

Our road this day lay for the most part away from the village, but we made some delay at Shobd, a town on ancient mounds, whose name clearly points out its origin in the days of the Pharaohs. A few scarabs and beads were our only reward for half an hour's delay, and we pushed on to Abooteeg, a clean, tidy, and comparatively rich-looking town. As the Collector was inquiring for *anteekas* at a goldsmith's workshop, an elderly man in a shabby European costume, with a plaid over his shoulders, came by. He was followed or attended by a number of men in ordinary Arab costume, one of whom explained that this was the Governor. The Collector, rather to our surprise, instead of receiving the information with pleasure, cast a look of despair at us, and as the governor shook hands with us all, whispered that nothing could be more unfortunate. When we had been longer on the road we understood the reason. The neatness of a town like this always indicates the presence of a large proportion of Copts. The Copts are always indigo dyers and gold or silver smiths,

and in their blue-stained hands are to be found most of the little hoards for which the Collector looks out with anxious eyes. The Governor of Abooteeg conducted us with dignified politeness to a divan in a gateway, and telling us that the town contained plenty of *anteekas*, and that all were ours, ordered coffee and called the owners of curiosities to come forward. Soon a crowd assembled, whose pale complexions, intelligent faces, and superior clothes showed them to be all Copts. But the arbitrary if polite way in which the governor attempted to conclude a bargain soon frightened them, and after the Collector had twice refused to give a man less than he wished to receive for a string of scarabs, it was evident that no business could be done. Reluctantly we bade farewell to the too, too civil potentate, and left Abooteeg very sorrowful.

The Coptic population must be very much in excess of the estimates given by *Murray* and the other books. We found them everywhere, and wherever we found them in large numbers there was a more prosperous appearance in the place. They resemble, in Egyptian towns, the Jews in Europe. They are the only native people who seem to engage in commercial pursuits, and drive a considerable trade in precious metals; every employment which requires skilled labour, such as carving, inlaying house-fronts, or coloured border-weaving, being in their hands almost exclusively. They mend clocks,

make tin pots, are the best carpenters, embroiderers, builders, tailors, jewellers, dyers, and butchers, in every town in which they have a colony. No doubt, it is not easy to recognize them. But whenever we met a man or a boy who was exceptionally sharp, or skilful, whose face was unusually handsome, whose skin was white, whose dress was neat, and if not new, at least well mended, we concluded with little fear of mistake that he was a Copt.

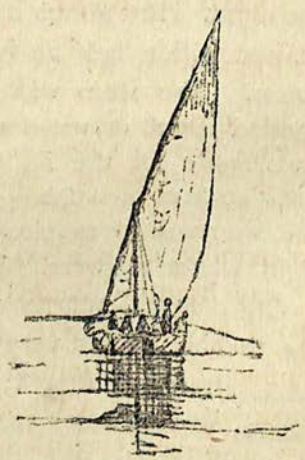
It is difficult, especially in Upper Egypt, to avoid wild speculations as to race. When we were at Sioot on our way down, we met a man at lunch on board a steamer who held the view that the Teutonic race, as he called it, must eventually supersede all other races. His chief arguments seemed to be that Egypt was in decay, that the French were not able to found colonies, and that he himself, an Anglo-Saxon, that is to say a Yankee, had made a fortune in California before he was twenty-five. It was in vain to point to Louisiana and Canada as old French colonies, or to show him that for the small population of Egypt, not equal to that of Belgium or Ireland, more than enough was even now being done, in spite of the Turks, to vindicate the comparative claims of the country to importance among other nations. He had thoroughly done Egypt. He had been on every one of Cook's excursions. He had taken an accurate and extensive view of the whole country, including its social and political aspects, from the deck of a steamer, and he

had not the slightest doubt that his estimate of its position and prospects was correct.

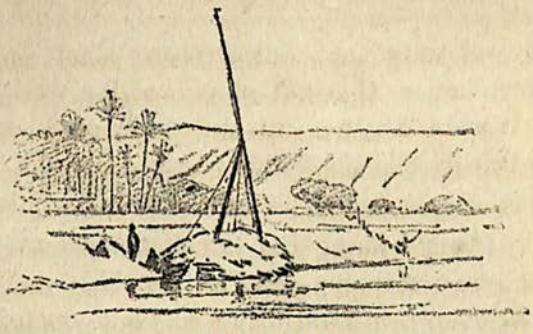
Here as elsewhere, in spite of our acquaintance's opinions, we found a remarkable difference between the inland towns and those which border on the river, and were more and more convinced that people who only see Egypt from the Nile, derive a wholly fictitious and, so to speak, one-sided, view of the country. If only on this account, we did not lose the time and trouble we spent on our journey.

Our wish was on this, our first day out, to push on to Tahta for the night. But about half-past five the sun went down, and within half an hour we were in complete darkness. We were without moon, and after a short period spent in wandering out of the regular track, we made for the lights of a village. Finding ourselves at last in a fine grove of palms, close to Temneh, we resolved to pitch our tents and rest for the night where we were. The village was some way off. Our men did not yet understand the mysteries of tent-pitching; and a very cold half hour was spent in the afterglow, first trying for good ground, and then to obtain water and "birseen" for the donkeys, and finally to get the fire lighted. The cold was already intense. The Irishman sat shivering over a few embers of charcoal, while his companions warmed themselves by exertions for the common weal, but when at length the walls of the

tent were secured against the biting wind, and the beds set up, we all acknowledged ourselves extremely comfortable, and within a few minutes a dinner, magnificent in quantity if not also in quality, was smoking on our very rickety table. Eight o'clock saw us all safe for the night, and if we did not sleep well it was not for want of fatigue, warmth, and the recollection that our first day's march had covered not less than two and thirty miles of country.



A FERRY BOAT.



A STRAW BOAT.

CHAPTER XI.

THE GREEK SHOP AT SOOHAG.

Tahta—Anteeka-hunting—A Disappointment—Luncheon—Benhow—Sunset—A Ride in the Dark—A Forced March—Dangers—The Scot Abroad—The Country Disturbed—Soohag—Another Disappointment.

EARLY the next morning we reached Tahta, a town standing a little way from the bank of the Nile on a kind of estuary of its own. Here, while the Collector searched among the goldsmiths' shops for antiquities, his companions found a Greek shop full of the good things of other countries than Egypt. Pickles, tea, sugar, jam, and various other stores were successively produced and some of them were bought; but the shopman was not satisfied till we had tasted his bitter beer. Greatly to our astonish-

ment it was excellent: and then one of us observed with satisfaction that the stone bottles which contained it were labelled with the trade marks of two North British brewers. The Greeks here, as elsewhere in Egypt, have all trade of this kind in their hands. Boats bearing the Greek colours are to be seen at every stopping-place on the Nile, and dahabeeah's can seldom want for stores while one of these most convenient traders is to be met. We encountered one at Luxor. It had on board besides the jam, wines, and tea aforesaid, coats, hats, hosen and other garments, including neck-ties and umbrellas of the latest European fashion.

Hassan assured us that we need lay in no store of these good things at Tahta, because in the evening we should reach Soohag, and bottles were badly suited for carrying on donkeys. At Soohag, he told us, and was confirmed by the Collector, who on this and other occasions might have been called the recollector, that on the river's bank there was a still better Greek shop, and that when we arrived we should be able, if we liked, even to dine there. The Antiquary had a dim remembrance of seeing some such place from the deck of a dahabeeah two years before. So we departed from Tahta after buying one bottle of ale for luncheon.

While we had pursued our inquiries as to the resources of Soohag the Collector had been busy elsewhere. The Copts were numerous, and rich jewellers'

shops abounded: and at one, in a very narrow part of the bazaar, he was seated for more than an hour looking at hoard after hoard of *anteekas*. A crowd stood around, and it was impossible in the press even to catch a glimpse of him. Now and then a donkey with wide bags would clear the street, or a camel loaded with faggots sweep it. An old woman, perhaps half blind, made, however the greatest sensation: for she bore on her head a large bundle of doorra straw—that is to say canes about six feet long—we measured one "straw" afterwards which reached ten feet—and walking along a crowded bazaar about five feet wide from wall to wall, she was a very formidable person, and received from the inquisitive spectators of our friend's bargains, many remarks which in England would have sounded like the name of the parent of mankind.

Meanwhile after two or three successive strata of scarabs, bronzes, beads, necklaces, and other *anteekas* had been cleared off, the happy Collector came upon a treasure. It was an ancient beaker of striped glass, probably Arab. Most precious it was in his eyes and those of the Antiquary, who was summoned to look at it. Even the Scot could admire its delicate form and harmonious colours, but—how could it be carried? Hassan was called: and a moment of intense anxiety elapsed as the question was put.

"My gentleman," he began, but seeing that the

Collector and at least one of his friends, had their hearts set on this purchase, he gallantly undertook to convey it safe to Soohag, or wheresoever else we might pitch for the night, and immediately deposited it in the bosom of his robe.

By this time the morning had waned considerably. The Collector was hoarse with dust, heat, and anxiety, to say nothing of shouting, and we bore him off to pay a visit to our new Greek friend and partake of a draught of Edinburgh ale. But he was destined never to taste it. Hardly had he emerged from the jeweller's shop, when "there came one running" to tell him of fresh mines of treasure yet unworked. This time the mysterious and awe-inspiring word, "Dahab," was whispered.

Now "dahab" always threw both the Antiquary and the Collector into a state of wild agitation. Golden antiquities are not common. Too many fine gold ornaments and other relics have gone into the melting pot, since M. Mariette commenced his operations. The bastinado is not the remuneration which the happy finders of hid treasure count upon for their good luck: and it was but seldom that "dahab" was offered us.

The messenger would allow only two of the party to go with him. Them he swore to secrecy as to the street and house towards which he was about to conduct us. I have no intention of revealing the secret, in fact I never heard the name of that street, and

have already forgotten the complicated road by which we reached it. We sat down in a little shop which appeared to be empty except of long basket benches, but which, by its odour of hasheesh, betrayed its ordinary use. Here we waited a long time. At last patience beginning to fail, we sent a second messenger after the first. Presently both returned and with them a man who evidently had the "dahab." We felt our hearts beat as he took out a little bundle and proceeded to untie it. Should this prove to be a prize, perhaps a golden image, perhaps a necklace, perhaps even some jewels like those of Queen Aahhotep—our delay would not have been in vain. At last it came out of the many folded and knotted kerchief.

It was a worn-out impression of a common Byzantine coin, of the worst period, and barely worth its weight in gold.

Nothing more was offered. After we had mounted and were some distance on our road, the Collector observed:

"I wonder, if I had bought that wretched Basil, would the Copt have produced anything more. He looked too important to have nothing else."

But the mystery can never now be solved, and, at any rate, the owner demanded for his coin a sum equal to what it would have been worth had it been of the best period and the rarest pattern.

By two we were on the outskirts of a village called

Benhow. Here we seated ourselves on the grass under some palms, where there was a well. In a few minutes fresh cool water was brought to us, and with our rugs spread under us we reclined luxuriously and discussed sardines, hard eggs, cheese, milk, and oranges; and fain we would have rested a little when the bottle of Tahta-Edinburgh was finished, for the sun was very hot, and the bazaar and an hour's ride since, had been fatiguing. The Collector was, however, inexorable. We must hurry on to reach Soohag to-night. Then, once safe in the Greek café, we might relax as we pleased.

He had not succeeded wholly in his efforts when the Sheykh-el-beled came to pay us a visit. He was old and grey, a thin but powerful-looking Arab, clothed in the ordinary brown capote of the district, and evidently quite poor. We pressed a loaf and some eggs upon him, and he sat down and ate with us very willingly, being especially pleased with our cheese, which he evidently considered quite "le fromage."

He told us that there was much poverty about Benhow; and that the taxes were too great for the people. As he spoke we saw the first evidences of the famine with which we were soon to make very painful acquaintance. A woman, accompanied by two children, came out of the village to beg from us. They were all attenuated to the last degree. That they should have been allowed to get into

such a state among a people so charitable puzzled us at the time, but we understood better before long.

At last we started. Now, they had told us at Tahta that it was full four hours' ride to Soohag, and the sheykh of Benhow rather discomfited us by saying it was still full four hours' ride. We thought we knew better, and went on. Four hours from 2.30 would be 6.30; but at that time of year 6.30 meant an hour at least after sunset, and there would be no moon.

It is perfectly useless to try what is called "pressing on" with donkeys. They can keep up a certain pace all day. About three and a half miles in the hour, on an average, is all they can do, but they will do it without flagging for twelve hours at a time. If we got ahead the luggage donkeys lagged behind, and we had to wait for them. The afternoon went on, the sun seeming to get hotter and hotter as he neared the magnificent range of mountains which stretched as far as eye could see on our right. Every morsel of skin was burnt off the invalid's face, but he did not yet feel the pain which came next day when it seemed as if he had an attack of erysipelas.

We passed through a great field from which the sugar cane had not yet all been gathered. The men were delighted at the gift of a big piastre, to buy some to suck by the way. It was a fatal gift. From

this moment there was no chance of reaching Soohag, even in the after-glow.

Then came another serious consideration. Hassan overtook us wearing a very long face. The people had told him, he said, that owing to the excessive taxation following on an unusually high Nile, there was great distress in the district, and that many robbers infested the roads by night. He was anxious we should camp near the first substantial village we came to: a proposition to which we wholly demurred, for in the first place we had been promising ourselves the flesh-pots of Soohag, and secondly we were very sceptical as to the existence of robbers.

At any rate, we did not come to any large village. One appeared in the distance, and we met many villagers coming home from a fair, some riding, some walking, all carrying things they had bought or had failed to sell: but their village was at the other side of a canal we had crossed with infinite trouble, and we did not like to turn back.

Then came another prospective trouble. The roads, these villagers told Hassan, were so much broken down by the inundation that the boys from Siout, who had been this way last year, would not know the way this year. This was sufficiently alarming, but just as the last quarter of an hour's sun, by finger measure, was still shining on the sight, one of us perceived, or thought he perceived, the minarets of Soohag, straight ahead.

We were now on the bank of a wide canal, the Moia-t-Soohag, an up-country repetition of the Bahr Joosaf. In fact we were riding along the steep slope with the water on our left, and a wide expanse of very low-lying fields over the bank on our right. When we had crossed, where the water was shallow and partly dry, we expected to be at Soohag immediately: and the sun had then nearly an hour to go. But now the sun was rapidly disappearing, and of Soohag we could give no better account than that one of us thought he had seen a minaret.

The next moment down went the sun behind the purple mountain; Ra had retired into the bosom of nature, had become Toom, had begun to tread the sinuosities of Apep, the serpent of the nether world. It was all very well to attempt to veil the fact in mythological fables, but our hearts misgave us sadly at his departure. A few minutes after-glow, the glimmer of a star in the purple west, a silver mist trembling for a moment in the air, and we were plunged into cold, dark night.

As the zodiacal light disappeared, the darkness became literally Egyptian. Perhaps a little mist increased it, but that must have been overhead, for about us the air seemed dry and sharp. We crept on along our ridge. The water on our left, so long as it was in sight, which was not long, looked like ink. We dismounted at last, for, after all, a fall from one's feet is bad enough, but a fall from a donkey is that

much more complicated and objectionable. The Irishman was in front driving his donkey, reinless, before him. The donkey disappeared suddenly, but soon after emerged at the other side of a deep cutting made for a shadoof. He had left his saddle-bags in the abyss, which was fortunately dry. I have observed that when a donkey carries saddle-bags, every accident that can possibly happen to him dismounts them. It is a law of his nature, perhaps, but we had much evidence this night of its stringency.

The donkey found in the darkness and the bags replaced, we discovered next, to our dismay, that the road, already too narrow, but unobstructed, was suddenly made narrower still, and that in two directions, one vertical, one lateral. A wall appeared, or rather was felt, on the right, and trees with long branches overhung it. The first of the baggage donkeys that came up the slope of the shadoof cutting, immediately struck his load against a branch, and incontinently fell. A halt was called of necessity. He was unloaded, set on his legs, the tree passed, and the load put on again,—a work of twenty minutes, including a long search with a candle in the sandy bank lest anything had fallen out. The Collector was anxious for his glass, but at such a moment hardly liked to mention it, for Hassan, active, though lame from the tread on his foot of a stumbling and benighted ass, was already too busy. The second donkey bore the tent-poles. Coming up from the depths he struck

one against the wall, and everything he carried rolled down the slope into the darkness. And so on, till every one of our train stood on the narrow path under the wall. The Collector made a "cast" ahead hoping to find a path. But no path was to be found. The wall seemed interminable except at one point where there was an exit into a meadow half under water. Meanwhile the Scot exhibited to the full the qualities which have already made me praise him as a travelling companion. At every catastrophe his spirits rose. This was something like—he did not say what. He pulled up the fallen donkeys. He pulled down the wall that the baggage might pass. He found the bundle of candles when the cook had declared they must have been left behind. He reassured the frightened boys who expected each moment the apparition of a ghost or a robber. At last his good spirits and evident enjoyment of what he was so unfeeling as to call the fun, were too much for the Antiquary, whose sluggish Ulster blood was frozen in his veins, and who looked forward with horror to rheumatism on the morrow, to say nothing of fatigue to-night.

The Scot, however, was impervious to his most sarcastic remarks, and it was not till after an oft-repeated complaint that he was persuaded at last to join feebly in a remonstrance addressed to the Englishman whose carelessness of mere time and distance had led us into the scrape. For the Englishman, however,

these expressions had little weight. The glass was on his mind. It was hopeless to suppose that it could survive the disasters which occurred every moment.

The question of pitching where we were was mooted. But you cannot pitch a tent on a bank of loose sand sloping like the roof of a house, and the ground outside the wall was a morass. We must struggle on. At last a light was seen on the other bank of the canal. Could it be Soohag? No, Soohag was there, straight on in front. It must be a village, but no, it moved, drew near, and then as we called, rapidly grew less and disappeared.

A few minutes, it seemed to us a few hours, later, another light came in sight. Hassan was for keeping still, fearing robbers, but we insisted on his hailing it, which he did "in a voice of ill-suppressed emotion." This time an answer came. We offered "backsheesh keteer," very much backsheesh, for a guide to Soohag, and were told it was about an hour off, and that a guide would come soon. Another long pause ensued, and then three brown-robed men, each bearing a great staff tipped with iron, appeared among us. One of them was the village watchman, the other two had come to take care of him, and for once we had an answer to the question, "Quis custodiet ipsos custodes?"

The country, he explained, was in a sad state. Men had been killed for money, because the Khedive had

taken away all they had for taxes, and they were starving. It was curious to observe how "Effendina" was spoken of as if he was a thunderstorm or some other devastating influence, or a visitation of Providence. It was curious also to see how complete the village government seems to be, even in remote places, and how little the central government need do to keep order in country districts. This man had to take his turn of watching, and there were others told off to take his place. We never had any difficulty, either here or elsewhere, in obtaining guards to sit round our tents at night. Sometimes, like our guide this evening, they were only armed with big sticks; but sometimes they carried guns, generally fire-locks of an obsolete pattern, more likely to be dangerous to the shooter than the shootee: and we were always glad in the morning to discharge our guard before he had discharged his gun.

Achmet the son of Ali told us that so far we had come right, and that we must still proceed along the bank on which we were then struggling. This was not pleasant news, nor yet to hear that Soohag was still distant "wahed sah," one hour. Opportunity had been taken during the halt to examine the men and the luggage. The casualties were:—Hassan trodden upon, the Collector rammed in the ribs by a donkey carrying the tent-pole, and the iron bar of a bedstead lost; but against these misfortunes were put—the safety of the Arab glass,

though it had three times fallen out on the sand, the safety likewise of the Antiquary's *Murray*, though it had twice visited the bottom of a shadoof, and the prospect on which we all insisted, comforting each other by it, that we might repose comfortably and drink coffee, or perhaps Edinburgh ale, in the Greek café at Soohag—when we got there.

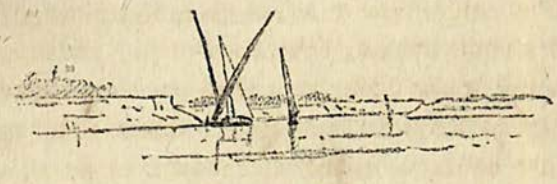
There were many falls before we got off the bank, which we did after an hour's further march. Then we emerged on what appeared to be a boundless sandy plain, and followed Achmet the son of Ali for about half an hour, the light getting a little stronger as the sky cleared and innumerable stars shone forth. We were all very tired; even the Scot allowed that the repose of the Greek café would be grateful to his stalwart limbs. But we had not yet reached Soohag, and could not even descry the lights of the town. We stopped the guide. He had told us it was "wahed sah" to Soohag, but now we had been marching for an hour and a half and could see no sign of the town. Had Achmet the son of Ali lied unto us?

No: Soohag was straight on, about "noose sah," half an hour off. It was rather a bewildering calculation and we were too far through to examine it. If an hour and a half is "wahed sah," plus the distance from where we were then to Soohag, what would "noose sah" be? Meanwhile we once more turned into a water-course, along which we walked for about

a mile, the riding donkeys going on in front and the luggage donkeys following, no one talking: then a donkey in front went so fast that he got out of sight. At the same moment the last donkey behind fell. The Antiquary being otherwise useless, pursued the runaway, and the others, including the guide, unloaded the fallen beast, dragged him up on his feet, loaded him and set out once more. Meanwhile a loud shout in front told them that something had happened. The Antiquary had gone on alone, leading two of the donkeys by the bridle, when in the darkness he suddenly stumbled over a body and nearly fell. Immediately the body rose, and another like it. They were the guards of Soohag, and had been seeking a shelter from the biting north wind behind a low bank, from the top of which the Antiquary had stepped down upon them. Various salutations and congratulations followed, the gate was close by, the dogs were barking, the hens were cackling, and occasionally a light flashed up and was reflected from a high wall, or a whitewashed minaret. We entered a narrow windowless street and wound along over dust heaps and loose bricks, until we emerged upon an open space surrounded on three sides by houses. The fourth side was the river bank, here very high, the river itself being invisible. A row of trees seemed to overshadow the bank.

The last few steps, now that a haven of rest seemed

almost in sight, if any thing can be called "in sight" on so dark a night, appeared the worst of all. We dragged our weary limbs along, too tired to care where we stepped. We longed for a drink, even of thick water, but our tongues were too much parched to allow of our saying so. Oh! for the Greek café! Oh! for a bench to lie down on, be it never so hard! But before we could seek the friendly Greek we had to find a place to pitch the tent. Then there was half-an-hour's work to get it up. The things were all misplaced, and at first many seemed to be lost, though eventually they all, except the iron bar, turned up. Thirst overcomes hunger, but we were very hungry. It would take an hour at least to get dinner ready—or supper rather, for it was now ten. When everything had at length been put in trim, we turned to the houses to find the Greek shop. But it was not to be found. No such place existed, apparently. At last a Soohagian told us the terrible truth. The times had been so bad that the Greek merchant had failed. He had shut up his café, and had gone away, nobody knew whither.



THE NILE AT SOOHAG.

CHAPTER XII.

THE DONKEYS.

Importunate Beggars—St. Christopher—The Character of William Rufus—The other Donkeys—Arab Towns and Villages—Girgeh.

EARLY in the morning, before the sun was up, the Collector by way, perhaps, of curing his injured rib, ran down the bank with a piece of soap and had a bath in the Nile. His account was that the water was deliciously warm, and that he felt himself another man. The Scot on this, woke up, and declared he must have a swim. A few minutes later he returned. The water was as cold as ice. He was chilled to the marrow. The Antiquary prudently lay still, and after listening to this diversity of opinion concluded at last that it would be better to get some hot water from the cook and perform his ablutions in the tent. To tell the truth, he was rather surprised to find himself alive, and not dead, but only stiff, after a night's march

which he would, prior to experience, have considered certain to prove fatal.

Meanwhile the Collector called upon the others for their sympathy. He had lost his towel. He took it down the bank and thought he had brought it back. But no: it was not to be found, and he had to borrow for immediate use. His loss was supplied by purchase at Girgeh, but it was eventually ascertained that he had himself packed the missing towel at the bottom of his saddle-bag.

It will be perceived from the above notes that our evolutions the morning after our arrival at Soohag were not of a very early or lively character. We were all very tired; and were not at all sorry to hear that the donkeys had not received enough birseen, and that we must wait an hour till they got a fresh supply, which we did.

Two of us, meanwhile, lazily surveyed the beauties of Soohag. They were not many; but beggars were. Nowhere had we seen such poverty. The professional beggar, generally in Egypt a well-fed and luxurious person, whose only serious labour in life is flea-hunting, here appeared to be absolutely starving, while another class, hitherto superior, had also taken to demanding *backsheesh*.

On the river's bank the presence of dahabeeahs has always a demoralising effect; but there must have been great want at Soohag. The guards kept a ring round our encampment: but outside it a circle of

many hundreds was assembled, and even scraps of crust, and the peel of an orange were eagerly snapped up.

The Englishman was moved with compassion: and very imprudently began to give away piastres before the packing was finished. The importunities now became overwhelming. The Irishman mounted, hoping to ride on a little space, and in order to clear the way one of the donkey boys was so foolish as to throw a stone. Immediately the air was thick with stones, and the unhappy Antiquary was very glad to escape with one heavy blow at the back of the head. His companions overtook him in a few moments, and much backsheesh was distributed before we reached the immense bridge and dam of ornamental (?) brickwork, which during the days of his prosperity the Khedive erected to regulate the water supply of his sugar fields further inland.

The morning was now most lovely. On the left we had long reaches of the river gleaming in the sunshine, while the tall sail of a magnificent dahabeeah rose like a white tower among the palms. We rode along a high embankment then but recently finished, for the inundation had destroyed the old one. The road along which we had struggled so hard last night had not yet been mended. The land lies low round Soohag, but is very wide, and the yellow sand of the desert on the right seemed full ten miles off. Above it again were the grey flat-topped mountains, and the

Collector showed us, on the edge of the cultivated land an ancient monastery, which, tradition says, was founded by St. Helena. St. Shenoodeh is the patron, and figures also in the Moslem calendar: a kind of Janus among saints.

The hagiology of the Copts must be very interesting. We suggested to the Collector that he should write a book about it, and trace the connection which some of the modern saints, as St. George, undoubtedly have with the heathen gods and demigods of ancient Egypt. But collecting is a hard taskmaster, and I doubt if ever he will take the leisure for such a work.

Meanwhile our embankment suddenly came to an end, having landed us on the brink of a wide canal. Talking of saints, there on the opposite bank was St. Christopher. What a giant he was! His wearing apparel was microscopic, but his muscles were like the muscles of an ancient bronze. He ferried us across one by one on his own back. Then as we sat on our rugs and surveyed the scene, he went back for the luggage, and brought it over. Last of all, amid the laughter of the donkey boys, he carried Mustafa our cook, not heeding our wish that he might drop him into the water. For Mustafa looked as if a dip would not harm him: and his French boots, we knew, concealed feet quite accustomed to going bare.

We debated among ourselves what remuneration

would be sufficient for the mighty man. He was a Christian, he told us, and might well have been the descendant of the Christopher who carried the Holy Family over a river on their flight into Egypt. So, running two or three legends into one, we talked until the task was complete, and our naked co-religionist came to claim his well earned reward.

Now what pay is sufficient for carrying three heavy Englishmen, two Arabs, and eight donkey loads of luggage over a canal forty yards wide, besides helping to load and unload the said donkeys, and to force them through the water? We gave him sixpence, and he thanked us so warmly that it was quite evident he had never done so good a morning's work before in his life.

"If an able-bodied man," reflected the Scot, who was fond of putting two and two together, not having been long in Egypt, "if an able-bodied man like that thinks sixpence good pay for a morning's work, it is evident that wages must be very low, and living very cheap: it is also evident that where so little is enough to keep a man, poverty must be very great before so many are reduced to the edge of famine."

Observations which, we told him, did equal honour to his head and heart, and were cordially assented to on our part.

The donkeys went all the better for their dip, but they were unmistakably tired after last night's forced march. Even the little red one on which the

Antiquary was mounted began to flag, and one of those which carried the baggage seemed quite knocked up. But we were only going to Girgeh to-day, and expected to get there in time for a quiet afternoon's rest.

The Scot generally led the way on a black spindle-shanked animal, which, without any apparent beauty or merit, yet had many excellent qualities, moral and physical. He showed, for instance, a genuine talent for leading the train; and was a steady goer, without that curiosity about other donkeys' feelings and opinions which characterised some of his companions. Against these good features in his character must be put an unfortunate habit of lying down suddenly without warning or notice of any kind. This propensity he showed more especially when he came to a piece of dusty or sandy ground, and he tried it once too often the afternoon we passed through Farshoot. The Scot had dismounted and walked on ahead, and Metwally, who was tired and footsore, mounted the black donkey. When out of our sight some strange accident occurred, which betrayed itself in a pair of broken knees, and the black donkey lost the lead.

The Collector bestrode a short stout ass which he had ridden the same road two years before. He considered it had visibly aged in the time, but if, as is said, donkeys never die, I do not know why they should show such signs of age. One thing was

possible, namely, that the Collector himself had grown heavier in two years, and that the donkey felt the difference. Still, as asses go, it was a good and stout beast, and had what donkey-fanciers like as much as horse-fanciers like a rat tail, *videlicet*, drooping ears.

But the red donkey differed entirely from all the others in character, morals, and physique. We very early conferred on him the name of William Rufus, after

> "William, called Rufus from having red hair,

and he unfortunately soon showed that he shared other qualities of that vicious and unprincipled monarch. He was argumentative, and brayed at the slightest provocation, especially if he heard the sound of another bray, be it ever so distant, or saw an ass feeding in a field, or, above all, if a young donkey foal gambolled across the path. At the sight of youth William was ever most deeply moved: so much so indeed that sometimes he would superadd a second bray to the tail of the first, and spin out his "third and lastly" with an indefinite series of deep drawn sighs. He was moreover very combative, and when there was any disturbance in the equilibrium of the tent-pole we recognised the presence of William among the pegs; he would have broken his tether and skipping across the ropes be engaged in showing alternately his teeth or his heels to whichever of the other asses had chanced at the moment to

offend his too tender susceptibilities. He had also another bad feature in his total want of moral principles, and would help himself to his neighbour's birseen, or tread down the poor man's growing corn, or endeavour to plunge his nose into the soup tureen, or to steal a carrot without any sign of compunction. Against all these faults must be put a remarkable power of endurance, and a lively spirit. He was alternately at the head or the tail of our procession, for his rider, after a brief struggle for supremacy, gave up the hopeless contest, and William wandered as he pleased. He was always ready to trot, often to gallop, and that too he performed with little or no reference to his rider's views on the subject. But he never once fell down during the journey, and "kept a trot for the avenue" (of sphinxes) between Karnac and Luxor on the last day of our ride.

On the way to Girgeh, this day, he was rather depressed. He had brayed away all his voice at Soohag, and only a hoarse whisper came in response to his most vehement sighs. He contented himself by refusing to allow his rider to converse either. As soon as we got well into a story of the Collector's, or one of the Scot's most cherished reminiscences of St. Andrews, William would move off. He was equally deaf to entreaties and to blows. The Antiquary had been much moved at Soohag and elsewhere by the changes undergone by ancient names between Coptic and Arabic, but his views

on the subject are lost for ever to the world owing to the frowardness of William, who, waiting until he had got absorbed in his subject, took advantage of the absence of mind incidental to such studies, and carried the lecturer far ahead of his audience. When he had gone on for some minutes without a response from his companions, he divested himself of the covering which his raw face had made needful against the roasting rays of the sun, and, looking round, found that they were half a mile behind at least.

We were now almost at Girgeh, one of the most picturesque of the Arab towns on the Nile. Picturesque it is on the Nile, viewed that is from the river; but entering it by the back-door, so to speak, or from the landward side, it looks by no means so inviting.

Towns like Soohag, Girgeh, Sioot, Keneh, and a few others differ much from the villages we pass in the fields. The villages are of two distinct kinds. Some are built on high mounds, the accumulations, for the most part, of millenniums of crude brick buildings. Some, on the other hand, are flat; but protected from the inundation very imperfectly, I fancy, by thickly buttressed walls, and a wide moat, which is full of water in October, a fetid marsh in December, and dry in spring: a place of bad smells and air thickened with mist and mosquitoes. Every here and there a house has fallen over the wall, and an avalanche of crude brick is being melted into the

moat. Here the children bask, naked, except for a thick incrustation of flies, and the dogs sleep among them. There are good watch-dogs, less than half wild, in some of the villages of the Howara country, of which the children seem particularly fond; but a still more numerous breed are like the miserable mangy creatures familiar in the streets of Cairo and Alexandria. As you walk round the village to find an entrance, you come, if it is on a mound, to what looks like a newly extemporised path, leading up at an angle so steep that your hands often touch the ground as you climb. If there is no such mound, you probably enter without any gate between two high mud walls, and find yourself presently in the public *place*, a square of perhaps fifty feet each way, with mud seats or divans round three sides and the sheykh's residence, sometimes a mere hut, at the other. Sometimes there is not even so much of a street in the village as this, and the sheykh's house looks directly out on the open country. In this case it probably has a whitewashed front and a great door, or at least a doorway marks the entrance. Some villages have beautiful greens of very fine small grass, interspersed with palms, surrounding them; but the tendency of taxation within the last few years has been to cause these pleasant places to be desolated, because the palms cost from five shillings to seven shillings each a year, whether they bear or not, and the grass is, like an English village common, often

only so much waste and unproductive land. It was in these palm groves we usually found our best camping-places. A sheykh's tomb, with its white-washed mud dome, is usually to be seen gleaming through the shade, and near it there is often a well, with a very primitive wheel made of sticks and cords. Here the elders of the village sit and smoke, and the women gossip as they fill their great pitchers. You never see men and women talking together, and, in the Howara country at least, the women seldom approach near enough for the stranger to obtain more than a passing glance. The children are wretched-looking little objects: small of limb, and large of stomach. There is an all-pervading smell, too, which is very unpleasant, caused, for the most part, by the use of camel's dung for fuel. You wonder how people can live in such a stink, but probably it is not so unwholesome as it seems, and certainly the adult Arabs, those, at least, who survive infancy, are very fine-looking men, tall, strong, upright, but very spare.

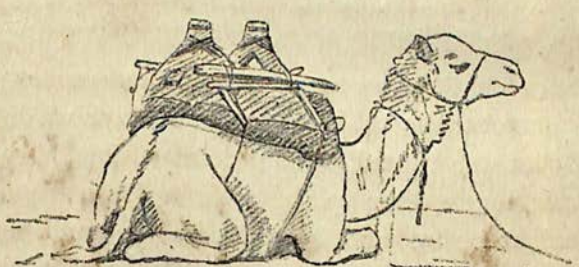
Towns, such as that we were now approaching, differ much from the villages. They stand often close to the river's edge, and Girgeh in particular has lost much from the fall of the bank on which it stands. The long, windowless, and winding streets are full of a smothering dust. Flies are numerous and troublesome. The smell is even worse than in the villages, though sanitary arrangements are not wholly neglected,

and every mosque has its public lavatory adjoining. The town is divided into quarters, each entered by a narrow arched gateway, with the name on a tablet above. Girgeh, as its name imports, the town of St. George, is a head centre of the Copts, and is full of dyers and goldsmiths. The bazaars are spacious and good, though we could not find a corkscrew anywhere for sale. The beggars, too, were very troublesome and importunate, perhaps all the more on account of the famine, but we remembered them much the same in former years.

When we had ridden through a kind of market-place just within the walls, we passed for a few yards through a narrow lane, and suddenly emerged on the river's bank, close to which the houses were built, room for a single donkey being all that intervened. Stones have been thrown down the slope, as a measure to prevent the strong current which here sweeps past, from undermining the town any further. I do not know that this expedient is of much use. Below, so that we could look down perpendicularly on the decks, were numberless boats and a dahabeeah or two. Opposite was the splendid mountain which makes Girgeh such a favourite place with the artist. We rode south along the top of the bank until we had gone past all the houses, and descended into a field where the river bends away to the east, and there, among growing plants of tobacco, we found a bare place in which to pitch our tents.

The beggars did not molest us, and we rested on our beds till sunset, enjoying the changing tints of the mountain and river, deepening first into orange and then into purple, as the evening grew first red, and then dark.

As soon as the candles were lighted on our table there came to us divers Copts, affecting great secrecy as to the *anteekas* they had to sell. Their ideas of value were very different from what we had found further inland, and we were glad to let them go in peace without any purchase more considerable than a scarab or two and a glass bead.



CHAPTER XIII.

THE ANCIENT THIS.

An excited Antiquary—Egyptian Chronology—Arabat-el-Madfooneh —The Temples—The Sacred Windhover—Edfoo—The Table of Abydos—Casabianca—A Hill of Tombs—An Old Brick Fort.

BEFORE daylight we were astir. The sun had not yet risen over the table mountain towards which our tent door was turned, but in a short time the grey turned purple, then pink, reversing the order of the night before, and by the time we were dressed the sun came peeping round the southern headland, and before breakfast was served his rays were dazzling our eyes. This was to be a short day, so far as riding was concerned, though a long one in other respects, for to-day we expected to reach Abydos, the Coptic Abood, the sepulchre of Osiris, the oldest city of Egyptian history, the ancient This.

The Antiquary was strangely excited. He had been up and down the Nile, but never to Abydos. Health had failed him, and he looked forward and deferred his visit to a more convenient season. That season had now come, and his spirits rose in proportion. He had been reading all the previous afternoon, and as we passed through a glorious bean-field in full flower, ten miles wide at least, he gave vent to his feelings in a preliminary lecture to his companions.

First he spoke of Chronology. "When historians," he said, "have to measure time not by reigns, but by dynasties, the modern student's mind faints. We may reckon, perhaps, ten dynasties in England since the days of Egbert, a thousand years ago; but it is eleven hundred years since Egypt, conquered by the Arabs, ceased to count the Empire as her thirty-fourth dynasty. Fully fourteen hundred years have to be reckoned back beyond Cæsar and Cleopatra, according to M. Mariette, to reach the reign of Rameses II., the great Sesostris of the Greeks. But Rameses was the third king of the nineteenth dynasty. That is to say, roughly speaking, there were about twice as many dynasties between Rameses and the founder of the Egyptian monarchy as there have been between Queen Victoria and Egbert. All recent investigations go to prove the substantial truth of the lists of Manetho. M. Mariette virtually adopts them, for want of better, and all his diggings help to confirm him in trusting them. According to Manetho,

there were eight kings of the first dynasty, nine of the second, nine of the third, and so on, nothing in their average of years differing from our own. So that our English antiquaries have been very moderate in placing the foundation of the Egyptian monarchy back at a period so remote as 2700 B.C., and even Bunsen, with his estimate of 3,000, and M. Mariette, who does not hesitate to adopt Manetho with 5,000 at once, have something of proof on their side. To attain therefore any adequate notions on the subject of Egyptian chronology is by no means an easy task. The mind accustomed to measure time by our short English standards refuses to digest the nuts offered by Manetho. There are evident faults in the copies which are extant. They are themselves only quotations made by ancient authors, and are manifestly corrupt. One turns with almost a gleam of hope to Manetho's assertion that King Apappus, of the sixth dynasty was a giant, and reigned for a century. But *Papi* means a giant in the ancient language of the Nile valley, now represented by Coptic, and, in an inscription now at Boolak which is undoubtedly of the sixth dynasty, mention is actually made of the hundred years of his reign. What are we to do? Among other frantic efforts lately made to resist evidence of this kind, some one has supposed that these old Egyptians cut up one year into three or four. But what can they make of King Papi's nine cubits?"

Neither of his companions appearing anxious to answer the question, and William being unusually propitious, he went on,—

"The tablet of Oona, to which I have just referred, was found in a tomb at Abood, the ancient This. It records the life and services of the functionary whose name it bears, and is among the spoils with which M. Mariette has enriched the Khedive's museum. By comparison with another tablet he has made out the names of four kings of this sixth dynasty, which, according to all historical analogy, ought to be wholly fabulous. But this is only one among many examples which could be given of the way in which M. Mariette is working, and of the success which has so far attended his labours. He has literally discovered the remains of the place we are now going to, This, or Thinis, the cradle of the Egyptian monarchy. Their site was known, it is true; but they were buried in sand and in the mud-heaps accumulated by centuries of unburnt brick. Above all, in the narrow passage between two walls of one of the temples there, he has found the now famous table of Abood, casts of which are in all the museums. Here Seti I. and his mighty son Rameses II. are represented offering sacrifices to seventy-six of the kings who preceded them on the double throne. The list begins with Menes. The names are a selection from those given by Manetho, as are the names on the Hall of Ancestors at Karnac

and those on the table of Sakkara. M. Mariette speaks but slightingly of a fragmentary table also known as that of Abydos, which is in the British Museum; but M. Mariette's countrymen have unfortunately, in matters of this kind, given the world too many examples of what Mr. Herbert Spencer describes as the bias of patriotism; and you will probably go home without any diminution in the reverence you feel for the thirty kings whose names remain upon it. After the first shock is over, and the mind has begun to judge with comparative calmness of these stupendously long periods, they separate themselves into distinct groups. Just as on the tables selections were made among the too numerous predecessors, so, in endeavouring to classify the wonders of Egypt, we will find it convenient to discard our original ideas of the ancient civilisation. To some of our English writers the whole list of Pharaohs from Menes to Ptolemy Physcon consists of one long unbroken line; the religion, the language, the habits, the dwelling-places, the burial-places, the "anteekas" now dug up or manufactured, all belong to one people, one succession of kings—nay, to judge by what we hear and read, one period. Ancient Egypt is contrasted with modern, as one might contrast the Commonwealth with the reign of Charles II. No attempt is made to remember that the period which separated the first Seti from the last Ptolemy was probably as long as the whole Christian era.

In that time all the kings were not great, powerful, and rich. And in the old time before them, though here, as we have seen, years fail us as a measure, were there not eighteen dynasties, of which one at least consisted of sixty kings?"

This was a favourite grievance of the Antiquary, and we were not very sorry that at this point William carried him out of earshot, and his wrath was allowed to explode before he resumed—at least before we heard his next remarks. When we overtook him he was still speaking:—

"The great Rameses reckoned back to Menes at This. The civilisation under which Thebes flourished was a revival, tentative at first and slow to improve, of what in the distant past had been the civilisation of the pyramid builders. The great monuments of Lower Egypt were there to tell men of the race which had preceded them on the same ground so many centuries before. Probably there were priests and holy rites which had come down from the ancients of This. Probably there were genealogists to prove the identity of the races of Upper and Lower Egypt. But the gods changed with the men, and the worshippers of Osiris and Isis, of Phtah and Horus, of Ra and Chem, of the Wolf and the Crocodile, were like sects or like rival orders of friars."

So he went on for some time longer. But I do not think his audience was very attentive. There was too much to see and enjoy by the way, as we

wound along the road towards Arabat "the buried," as the Arabs call it.

The land of Egypt is here very wide. There are green crops everywhere—fresh with a greenness of which in England, even in Ireland, one knows nothing. There are flocks and herds in abundance, as of old, "even very much cattle," and at intervals the intense emerald colour is relieved by wide fields of corn in full ear, or immense tracts of beans in pod, or lupins as high as a man's head, or clover which conceals even the great carcase of the buffalo. Here and there slingers, each like St. Simon Stylites on his pillar, alternate the business of a scarecrow with that of a cotton-spinner. Clothes are perhaps cheaper in Egypt than they were when Sir Frederick Leighton painted his "Slinger," but, except in drawing water with the shadoof, few such statues of living bronze were to be seen. Another disappointment was equally bearable. We were accustomed to think of Egypt as a place devoid of flowers, as, in fact, the opposite of the "Flowery Land" with which it is so often compared. But in January, between Girgeh and Aboos, there was no lack of flowers. A great orchis, in particular, perfumed the air everywhere with a scent like vanille, its tall spikes bearing white flowers gradually changing into sulphur colour at the top. The ground was starred with a little oxeye, a very good imitation of our own "wee, modest, crimson-tipped flower," and many another might be mentioned.

"What is the meaning of Arábat el Madfooneh?" asked the Scot.

"I suppose," replied the Collector, "it must be akin to *Rabbath*, a Hebrew word for 'city.' The old town in Malta is called Citta Vecchia by the Italians, but the natives name it *Rabbat*. Madfooneh is Arabic for 'buried.'"

"I should prefer," suggested the Antiquary, "to see in Arábat an Arab corruption of the old Egyptian name, Abood, or Abot, which the Greeks made into Abydos. Now by transliteration ——"

"I beg your pardon," interrupted the Collector, "this is Bardees, where Osman Bey, the Mameluke was born; and that is El Berbeh."

"El Berbeh," exclaimed the Antiquary, "of course by transliteration that is Perpe, the old Egyptian or Coptic for temple."

"Yes," said the Scot, quietly, "you will find it in *Murray*."

Now to be detected quoting *Murray* was humiliation to the Antiquary, even though he did it unwittingly. He liked, he said, to get his facts from first-hand authorities, or from his own investigations. He was therefore silent for a space; and indeed the view was enough to require undivided attention.

They had been riding for some time along a straight road which seemed to lead right up to the mountains. Four or five miles of green land were still between them and the broad dark belt of palms which, as the

Collector pointed out, concealed the buildings of Abood. Beyond the palms, and at a higher level, was a waste of yellow sand; beyond that again the mountains formed an amphitheatre of nearly uniform height, but ending on the left, that is, towards the river, in a broken and picturesque cliff. On the right the amphitheatre was closed in by a hill of peculiar form, which stood forward from the rest of the range. The pyramidal summit, now that we had passed its "gable end," seemed to be the front of a long house-like ridge, built, so to speak, in storeys, familiar enough in form to any one who has ever been up the Nile, but unlike anything I have ever seen in England.

As we approached Arábat this hill came more and more forward, until the semicircle seemed almost artificial in its regularity.

"These mountains," observed the Collector, "have been but half explored. They are full of tombs, and if you look to the extreme right you will see one which must be of great importance, for it has an avenue or double cyclopean wall leading up to it, like the tombs of Beni Hassan."

Travellers usually approach Arábat from the east. We, as we had our tents with us, determined to go the other way, the more so as the Collector had promised to show us some things at the western end of the place which he said were not mentioned in any guide-book.

"If you look," he said, "a little to the right of the

palm-grove, immediately under that house-like mountain, you will see an Arab cemetery on the very edge of the sandy zone. At either end of that cemetery you will see a great brown mass which from here, in the blinding sunshine, looks like a pair of great rocks. That to the right, furthest from the palms, is a Coptic dayr, or monastery, in which there is an ancient church. The other one, to the left, is a mere ruin of crude brick. The two are of great interest. I take them to be both ancient buildings, one only having been utilised in Christian troubles for the protection of a Coptic community. No European traveller that I know of has mentioned them, but I am sure our Irish friend here will think them well worthy of antiquarian investigation."

An hour later we were seated on the grass near the walls of Arábat, eating a frugal lunch while the men put the tents up under the palms. It was now one o'clock, and the short afternoon would hardly suffice for all we had to see. A crowd of fine-looking men soon assembled at our encampment, and we had no difficulty in finding one to take charge of part of the party to the temple—"el Berbeh," as they called it. We wound through the village by the usual crooked lanes, past the inevitable pond, along the edge of a second grove of palms, behind which we could see the great heaps which mark the place of the ancient city. As we went by we caught glimpses of lines of old hieroglyphs built into walls and

cisterns, with here and there the serene face of a goddess, or a pair of arms outstretched in prayer to a vanished deity.

The temples have indeed been buried. Even now a great heap encompasses them on every side, and you have to make a steep descent to get into them.

The sculptures at Abood are said to be the best of the time of the nineteenth dynasty. Brugsch Bey has somewhere discovered the name of Hi, who was sculptor to Seti I. and his son, Rameses II. But I do not know that he can be identified with these works.

There are two distinct kinds of reliefs, those which are incised round the outline, but not cut away, and those in which the figures are wholly raised from the ground. Both kinds occur here, the relief being generally very low, as might be expected where light is so intense. Much colour of a very gaudy and unpleasant kind is to be seen, but here and there the plain white marble shows alone, and, to an eye prejudiced by the white statues of the north, is the most pleasing. Yet many details are lost where the colour has been wiped off; and the Antiquary was particularly moved by the sight, in a chapel dedicated to Horus, of representations of the shrine of the sacred hawk, with all the details fully coloured.

It had long been a favourite crotchet of his that the position of the kestrel among falcons, and among gods, had never been properly recognised. As he

looked up from examining, in the blinding sunshine, the details of the ornamental clothing by which the unhappy little godhead was kept from ungodly movements during the procession, from "baiting" off his perch, or pecking at the hands of his too attentive priests, he saw hovering high above him, suspended as a lamp is suspended from the dome of a Caliph's tomb, the little windhover whose direct ancestor may possibly have sat for the portrait before him.

Falconers, who rank hawks according to their length of wing and the colour of their eyes, despise the kestrel as a counterfeit. His wings are long, as long as those of the noblest peregrine; his eyes are large and brown; his beak has the requisite notches. But he is not a falcon. He is not noble. He preys on mice and beetles, and even the all-slaughtering gamekeeper spares him as perfectly innocent. People who care neither for falconry nor shooting like to watch him hovering in mid-air, as if suspended by an invisible wire from the zenith. He has become a familiar and pleasing feature in our recollections of many an English landscape. He hovers over many a broad Yorkshire valley, many a dark Welsh lake, many a Devonshire glen. And for the English exile in Egypt the windhover forms a happy surprise. No book of travels I ever read warned me that I would see it. Everything else was unfamiliar. The brown Nile the low mud-banks, the blue-robed women drawing water, the camels, the buffaloes, the tall palms, the

sandy desert background—all are strange. Even the settled serenity of the pale blue sky, unvarying day after day, has, in its perpetual sameness, a quality which makes it differ *toto cœlo*, so to speak, from our English sky. There is something, then, delightful in recognising as an old friend the little kestrel of our own air, hovering over a wide plain blue with lupins, or soaring above the highest cliff of the table-topped mountains, just as he hovered when we saw him last above a ploughed field in Sussex.

To my eyes he looks noble, even though he lets the heavy kites chase him, and seeks no higher game than a locust or a scarab. There is no region in the world, it is said, where the peregrine falcon is not found; everywhere he is, and everywhere he is scarce. But the windhover is almost as widely distributed, and in Egypt, at least, is one of the most common of birds. If we watch him closely while he sits for a few minutes on the pole of a disused shadoof, we observe that his plumage seems brighter than it is in England. The winter frosts and summer rains have not bleached it; but otherwise he is just the same.

One cannot but wonder if he finds times changed since he sat to Hi at Abood, and since Amen-uah-soo painted his portrait: since the people of Dendera worshipped him and ate the Ombite who had eaten a hawk. Does he know that he is no longer sacred, except to a home-sick English invalid?

and, as he rises in the air with a captured insect in his claw, does he look back longingly to the days when he had five hundred priests to wait on him and tanks full of young crocodiles to afford him musky cutlets? The black and white kingfisher hovers too, but only poised a few feet above the muddy surface of the stream. He does not soar towards the sun like the hawk, and, though kingfishers must have been as common of old as they are now, we do not meet them in the sculptures, where the hawk is always present. That he is the self-same bird we never doubt. Was he not immortal? who, indeed, until rifles were invented, could hope to shoot him? When the ancient Egyptians worshipped him it was as a fitting emblem of immortality.

There must have been sacred hawks in many places, for the worship of Horus was as universal as that of Osiris and Isis: though the best sculpture and painting which relate to him are here at Abood. The Antiquary well remembered, on his previous voyage up the Nile, that among the most marvellous examples of ancient art in Egypt was the shrine of the sacred windhover at Edfoo. The temple has been often described. It is the most perfect in Egypt, and though it only dates from the Ptolemies, would be of hoar antiquity in any other country. But the shrine of the god is more ancient than the temple, and has had but little attention from travellers. Like a very large sentry-box cut out of a single block of blue granite, it is not

impressive for its beauty, and requires a few minutes' contemplation before its size begins to tell on the mind. It is carved all over in low relief with hieroglyphs, which inform us that Nectanebo, of the thirtieth dynasty, dedicated it to Hor-hat. It is fully fifteen feet high, the chamber being nearly seven—a square space of polished stone, bearing still the marks of the bars which made it into a cage. Here in the darkness must many a captive kestrel have beaten out its little strength against the shining walls. How gladly would its divinity have been given up to soar once more in the clear air and hover again over the sandy hills or the smooth Nile! On the festal days its wings would be confined with what falconers call a "brail," made of golden lace but none the more pleasant on that account to wear—a kind of strait-waistcoat in which the visible representative on earth of Horus was carried forth in procession. The brail may be seen plainly in the sculptures at Abood, perhaps more plainly than anywhere else, as so much of the colouring is left. The two bows at its back, the golden fringe in front, the tassels hanging down, are plainly to be seen, and in one place the shrine itself is partly open, so that we see the unhappy bird with his great, mournful, wistful brown eye in strict confinement, while the priests prepare for the procession.

There was probably a hawk's shrine at Dendera, and another at Karnac. A granite one lay till the

other day neglected in the streets of Cairo, where it served during the day as a dust-bin, and during the night as a dog-kennel. Another has been made into a Christian altar at Philæ; for the degenerate Egyptians of the fifth century, though they could not quarry the granite rock for themselves, were able to break the shrine in two and to incise a shallow cross on its side.

When his friends joined him, the Antiquary was still contemplating the sculptures of Horus, and was with difficulty restrained from delivering the result of his cogitations in the form of a lecture, but contented himself with a few references to the connection which, according to some archæologists, exists between the ancient Horus and the Mediæval George. Here the Collector came to his help. "There exists," he said, "among the uncatalogued treasures of the Louvre a small stone statue, carved in a late and barbarous age of Egyptian art, in which the god on horseback killing the dragon Typhon is represented in such a way that, as M. Clermont-Ganneau observes, if the head of the figure had happened to have been wanting, we might have supposed it a figure of St. George. But fortunately the head is not wanting, and it is that of a kestrel. This singular piece of sculpture, and a bronze in the British Museum, in which Horus appears in the armour of a Roman officer, afford intermediate links by which to connect the old myth of the hawk god and his combat with the crocodile and the

comparatively new myth of St. George and the dragon. Mythologists throw in Perseus and Dagon, and many other personages in different parts of the world, to complicate the questions thus suggested."

"I confess," said the Scot, who seldom ventured to criticise the antiquarian opinions of either of his friends, "I confess I look upon attempts to identify gods and saints, Isis and the Blessed Virgin, for instance, or St. George and Horus, with very great suspicion."

"Yes," rejoined the Collector, "but is it not written in the pages of *Murray*, that when the voyager passes Bibbeh, a village on the western bank of the Nile some 80 miles above Cairo, he may visit a Coptic church, where, under the name of St. George, a hero of the Moslem as well as the Christian is venerated, a 'sheykh' of such power that the Arab sailor thinks it no sin to recite a prayer before his likeness, and to contribute a few small coins towards keeping up the lights in his sanctuary? Girghis," he added, "is not uncommon even now as a Mahometan no less than as a Christian name. The compiler of *Murray* well remarks that, though Copt and Moslem alike believe in St. George, it would be difficult to persuade them that he is the guardian saint of England; and he might have said that it would be probably more difficult to demonstrate to the modern Egyptian that, in venerating this saint, whom even Roman Catholics have, we believe, given up, he is continuing the worship of his forefathers thousands of years ago."

Meanwhile the rest of the temple, the second temple, the grave mound, and the crude brick fort had to be visited. The Antiquary was charmed to find that the chamber containing the famous table was open, having long been bricked up for fear of wandering tourist marauders, and promised himself an early hour to-morrow to copy the list of kings. The rest of this temple, the bas-reliefs of the early life of the young Rameses, the famous lasso scene, the figure of Seti I. making an offering to Osiris of the golden image of Ma, the Goddess of Justice, all these and many more were duly examined, and then we crossed a mound and descended into the second temple, which has hardly had the notice it deserves from travellers. In some respects, as for example in its granite portals and in the shrine lined with blocks of alabaster and walled with red syenite, it is superior even to the eastern temple. But it is much ruined, and did not delay us, perhaps, as long as it ought to have done. When in one reign, or parts of two at most, two such buildings could have been raised, the wealth of the country, or at least of the crown, must have been enormous. Yet we must add to them the still more marvellous Hall of Columns at Karnac, the Temple of Goorneh, the deep tomb known as "Belzoni's," and many other works of minor importance.

The best sculpture remaining now at the second temple represents, apparently, a procession of animals

fattened for the sacrifice. In this scene, which is very perfect, the low relief of the early period is well imitated; but it is in the eastern temple that the sculptures are worthy of the most careful study. Much colour remains on them, and on the walls of the inner hall the highest style of Ramesian art has been employed. It is not often that the art of the same period presents so many differing degrees of excellence as does that of the reign of Rameses II. At Gerf-Hossayn, for example, the acme of deformity and shapelessness is reached. At Bayt-el-Welly, not far off, on the other hand, there is some exquisite work. Here at This we have several kinds of sculpture in bas-relief side by side. In the outer hall it is coarse, heavily outlined; the figures being rounded within the outline, so as to give a false appearance of relief. This is the style in vogue in the later temples of the Ptolemaic time. In the second hall, however, a delicate low relief, which belongs only to the best work, covers the walls and columns. Similar sculpture, but of a much earlier period, occurs in the tomb of Thy at Sakkara, and a small example of it is, from its accessibility, well known to travellers at Silsilis.

Some of the figures at Abood are of enchanting beauty. Osiris sits attended by goddesses, each of them wearing on her face an expression of sublime happiness and tranquil dignity, while the King approaches humbly and offers a tribute of

incense. Exquisite borders of flowers hem in each scene. Jewelry, in gold, gems, feathers, chains, breast-plates, crowns, bracelets of various kinds, dresses of elaborate patterns, the braiding of the hair—all are carefully depicted, and each no doubt was once in its proper tint, before the attacks of the "squeezers," who have, however, greatly spared Abood.

We were glad to miss the never-ending lists of tourists, whose names disfigure so many of the best sculptures in Egypt. The Scot had been much astonished to observe that English names were more rare than French or German. Considering that about nine-tenths of the Nile tourists are English or American, it was strange, he thought, to find so little of their writing.

"Some years ago," said the Collector, "I remember to have seen it stated in the *Times* that the 'practice was confined to our countrymen.'"

"Here," observed the Scot, "I see a certain J. V. Abargues has been at the trouble of recording visits made in 1873, 1876, and the present year. It would be difficult to decide on his nationality, but certainly it is not English."

"No; he is perhaps a Greek. The French are the worst; but fortunately the French do not often travel. When they do, they take care to let you know it. The French Commission under Buonaparte probably disfigured more monuments with inscriptions

recording their visits than all the English travellers since."

"I found one French name to which I did not grudge the space," said the Irishman. "On the pylon at Edfoo, in a place where there was no carving and where it did no harm, Casabianca carved his name; this must have been but a few weeks before

"His boy stood on the burning deck."

While we thus talked we traversed the space intervening between the two temples and the great mound known as Kom e' Sultan. There is reason to suppose that this vast heap of sepulchres is the place which in all ages of Ancient Egypt was so highly venerated as the burial place of Osiris himself. Here Mariette conjectures were interred the mummies of the most ancient kings. It is often considered the central feature of This, but it rises close to the temples, and we could not help thinking that the distinction which is always made between Abood and This refers to those parts of the town which lay to the east and the west of the grave of Osiris.

The whole hill, which is of great extent, is made up of sepulchres, piled one on the top of the other. We could imagine the lower stratum to be a flat-topped tomb perhaps as large and as solid as the Mastába of King Oonas, or perhaps no more substantial than the crude brick tombs at Maydoom. As we rode

across it we started every here and there at seeing a deep pit yawning in our path. This was an excavation of M. Mariette, and displayed uniformly the same honeycomb work of arches upon arches of brick, each an Egyptian grave, and many of them still containing evidence of their former magnificence. It was distressing to see broken stelas lying about, but I suppose none of them bore inscriptions of importance. The few we examined were of a late period and poor workmanship, generally mere outlines in red paint or chalk on the stone. We did not see any of the "flat-topped" form of the ancient monarchy.

It was not very far from the foot of Kom e' Sultan to the first of the crude brick buildings of which I have already spoken. It stands on the edge of the desert—as indeed does the Kom e' Sultan. It looked very like a great Norman fortress as we approached it. Both the Englishman and the Irishman had been to the crude brick fort which frowns over the Nile opposite Dakkeh in Nubia, and both observed its remarkable likeness to the building before us. I have already written something about it,[1] and need not repeat what is there said. But we were all much impressed with this strange fort, for fort it must have been, whatever its age, and perhaps it is the nucleus of the ancient This. Perhaps this

[1] See Chapter XII.

castle-like structure grew from the first defences put up against the aborigines by the predecessors of Menes, those local kinglets whose realm eventually comprehended both "the Upper and the Lower Country."

That it is built of crude brick and not of stone—that its sides are plastered with "slime," and white-washed—these are circumstances rather in favour of its antiquity than the reverse. We measured the double walls. They are four hundred and fifty feet long from west to east, and in places nearly forty feet high. There is a space of twelve feet between them, and the inner wall is strengthened by flat buttresses which have a strange resemblance to the Norman buttresses which used to be visible round the old treasury at Canterbury Cathedral, but which I hear have been altered in form by some Goth of a restoring architect.

Within the walls we found an oblong space filled with broken stones, heaps of sand, and an innumerable assortment of brown earthenware jars.

"Every jar," said the Collector, "contains or contained the mummy of an ibis, and it would seem as if some flock of sacred birds in the neighbouring temples had a corner assigned to them in this castle where, like the forty thieves, they lay concealed until the recent excavations."

"Perhaps," suggested the Antiquary, "this was a library, a place where records were kept, and the

bird sacred to Thoth, the secretary bird of ancient Egypt, was here interred to sanctify the place?"

The question had to be left unsettled. The sandy slopes had been gradually assuming more and more a golden hue. Now the shadows which had crept across the desert from the encircling hills deepened into purple, and we had only time to canter over to the low portal of the second castle, the Coptic Dayr of which the Collector had spoken in the morning, when the sunset was upon us.

The Englishman went within the walls, while his companions rode slowly back. The Antiquary was struggling with that feeling of depression and disappointment which seems always to visit us when we have come a long way to see a famous sight or site—it is immaterial how we spell it; but rather because one feels so powerless to record one's impressions, or to know all one ought to know, to do justice, as it were, either by eating or digestion to the mental food provided. About the middle of the entertainment we find we can swallow no more. Yet we labour on, and hope that some future day we may be glad we at least saw all that was on the table.

As for the Scot, no such feelings troubled him. He was anxious to get to the tent because he had promised himself a hot bath before dinner, and because Hassan had promised to find him a barber in Arábat.

THREE LITTLE ARABS.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE TABLE OF ABOOD.

French Antiquaries—A long Delay—A Messenger—A long Walk—Rumours of the Famine.

"THERE must," exclaimed the Collector, with a strong emphasis on the second word, "be wonderful things here if one could only get hold of them."

We were sitting at breakfast at the door of our tent. The Irishman was thinking of the Table—not of the breakfast table, indeed, though to it he did ample justice, but of the list of kings at the further temple. Should he have time to copy seventy-six ovals in an hour?

The Lawyer was engrossed, besides his breakfast, with his chin, which retained the smoothness acquired last night. But when our Scottish friend stroked

that feature; it generally turned out that he was cogitating some scheme for the good of mankind in general, and any one but himself in particular.

"The fact is," continued the Collector, "when the French were here,—I don't mean the French army, but some recent emissaries of the Khedive, to collect *anteekas* for Boolak,—they treated the people so shamefully that they are afraid now to be even suspected of having found anything."

"Please don't say a word against the Boolak Museum," exclaimed the Antiquary, to whom during a whole winter in Cairo it had been a source of joy and happy employment.

"Upon my word I'm afraid it's true. Your genuine Frenchman has such queer ideas where anything which he considers science is in question. One Frenchman had no objection when the great Canal was projected to accept the lives of thousands of the fellahs, torn from their homes, to carry out his scheme. If the other governments of the civilised world had not cried out 'shame!' I warrant you the French would never have interfered. It was just the same here. If I had a fortune I would willingly spend it to have this Kom e' Sultan thoroughly explored—but rather than force the people from their fields to work, rather than have one man bastinadoed to give up what he had found, I would never look at another scarab."

We thought the Englishman rather hard on his

fellow-collectors, the Boolák authorities, as well as on the French in general—but he probably knew more than he told us, and his sympathies were all with the oppressed people. During the next few days there was ample scope for the exercise of this feeling.

Now the Scot, still stroking his shining chin and anxious to turn the conversation, propounded the following scheme. "While you are here superintending the packing up, the Antiquary and I will walk on to the temple. Somebody may bring you *anteekas* when we are out of the way, and meanwhile the Antiquary can have a good look at the Table. We cannot miss you, for you must pass the temple on your way with the caravan, and in any case I will look out from the top of the mound while he is within."

This good-natured proposal was too good to be declined, and a few minutes later the Antiquary was happily engaged copying ovals, while the Scot, surrounded by a crowd of children, old men, and especially sick people, who thought he must have medicine to give them, stood on the dusty summit of the mound looking out.

An hour he stood. The sun began to grow hot. The Antiquary having completed his task joined him. They prescribed as best they could for the sick. They bought beads from the necks of the little girls. They sent the little boys scrambling down the slope for halfpence. But no caravan appeared, and

at last, when two hours had elapsed they began to get uneasy. The Collector, they thought, must have had a rare find: but if so, why did not he send to tell them of the delay? They scanned the distant fields in vain. No caravan of donkeys was in sight, and every moment added to their anxiety and to the blazing heat.

At length a naked Arab appeared running and shouting from the direction of the river. He threaded his way through the narrow paths, was lost to sight a moment in some canal, emerged again on a green hillock, dived through the dark belt of encircling palms, and climbed breathlessly up the slope of *débris* on which the travellers were standing.

As well as they could understand him he had been sent to tell them the donkeys and the "great howaga" were gone about "ethneen sah," two miles or two hours, and not overtaking them had sent him back to look.

"We are hot enough already," exclaimed the Antiquary, dismayed at the prospect of two hours' fast walking across the country: "how can we have missed them? They should have come by this way, surely."

But there was no use in regrets, and the two, taking off their coats, made the best of their way after the Arab, already becoming a speck in the distance.

The Antiquary had one consolation at least. The whole Table of Abood copied into his note-book

was now reposing in a compendious form in his pocket.

When the Scot and the Antiquary overtook their friend he was sitting on a mud wall outside a little and very dirty village. Mutual explanations followed. The Collector was too good-tempered to be unpleasant, but he allowed himself to point out that the blame did not lie with him, adding, "for my part, I knew that when the Antiquary got fairly to work on the Table, there would be some such mistake." And with this not wholly pointless sarcasm, the matter dropped.

But our morning was all gone, and after a few slow miles we stopped for lunch. It was already two o'clock, and we were nearing Farshoot. Everywhere the Collector's melancholy at finding no *anteekas* worth speaking of at Arábat was deepened by the miserable appearance of the people. There were plenty of sugar canes, but nothing to eat. The children who gathered round our luncheon basket were literally skeletons. Our stock of small silver was quite exhausted before we reached the town. At last, our minds full of distress, we reached Farshoot, the afternoon turning into a hot, dusty evening. In the town all was misery. It was fair day, and the bazaars and market place were full, but full of famine-stricken faces, shrunk limbs, and gaunt forms. We rode quickly through the clouds of dust and flies, merely pausing to change some small pieces of money.

Even this we could scarcely do, so poverty-stricken were the market people.

In the distance, between us and the river, was, we knew, a great sugar factory of the Khedive's. Thither, through the sunset, we pointed our steps. But it fell dark before we reached it, though the chimney was in sight, and after some consultation we agreed to pitch our tents in a palm grove and rest for the night.

It took long to get everything in order, and our rest was disturbed by the cry of the mourners in the neighbouring village—a cry which hardly ceased as we went on, except in the open desert, till we were actually at the end of our journey.

There would be no object in my repeating the stories of famine which were retailed to us by the men who visited us that night. The little land left to the villagers from the cane fields had been so inundated that the doorra crop had been destroyed. All last year's corn had gone to *Effendina* for taxes. The beans would soon be ready, and those who survived might hope for the best. But next Nile might be as high as the last, and if so, who could survive another year?

With these sad forebodings in our ears we lay down to sleep.

"BASKING."

CHAPTER XV.

THE FAMINE.

The Morning Scene—A Starving Family—A Deserted Child—How—Shocking Sights in the Market-place—How to acquire an Estate—How to Buy and Sell Land—The Assessment of the Taxes—The Famine easily Prevented—Mr. Rivers Wilson—Semaineh—Marash-teh—A young Gentleman—A Deserted Village—A Dinner Party—Good Manners.

OUR route next morning lay along the river bank. Opposite, behind Ekhmeem, the ancient Chemmis, was the line of mountains, blue and beautiful through the morning air. We might have enjoyed the scenery, the shining water, the tall white sails, the green fields on the right, the clearing mist, the glorious light, but for the wretchedness all about us among the people. At one place, where we had to pause to pass a deep shadoof-cutting, a woman with two children was begging from the inhabitants of a little hut. They appeared to refuse her: and she came out on the

bank, weeping. When the Arab refuses alms to his fellow Arab, things must have gone very bad with himself. This scene showed that not only were the woman and the children starving, but also the people who kept within their house. The two children were naked, and looked like old women. The skin hung in brown folds about their skeleton frames. Their eyes were sunk. The younger was carried on her mother's shoulder, but the elder walked feebly and stooping in front. With all this want they did not follow us, and, indeed, we had some difficulty to make them come forward to receive our alms.

A little further we passed round a village. It was one of those of which I have already spoken, which are protected from the inundation by a moat and bank. The moat was now nearly dry, and as we went across the villagers were repairing the bank. About half way up it was a child lying alone, apparently asleep, with a cloud of flies buzzing round it. We stopped and asked about it. The child had been deserted, the people said: its mother had cast it down on the bank, and run away to get food. We offered them some money to take charge of it, and the Scot climbed the slope to put a piece of silver into the poor little creature's hand as it lay. Here again we had an indirect proof of the terrible state of poverty to which the people were reduced. The Arabs are so fond of children that such a scene will appear

incredible to any one who knows them. What became of that child? We have often wondered.

This was by far the worst day of our ride. About eleven we went through Ho, or How,—the name is locally pronounced Hö-o, in two syllables—and there it seemed as if the famine was at its greatest height. The Collector went into the town while the others kept in the outskirts. He overtook them with a face full of horror. The streets were full of starving people. They were picking up grains on the dung-hills. They were fighting over old bones. They were chewing straw. In the market-place a man was lying under the wall, actually dying, and a woman, with loud lamentations, was pouring water over him. Near him another appeared to be already dead. The others had seen similar misery in the outskirts: naked children whose bones were starting through the skin: mothers carrying skeleton babies, themselves little better: old men and old women lying hopeless and helpless to die in the sunshine.

"What a pity," remarked one of our party bitterly, "the Khedive cannot tax the sunshine." For the story we heard was everywhere the same. It was not the inundation which caused the famine. Similar inundations had not caused famines, for the people had always a little store, some of money, some of corn. At the worst, neighbours could help each other. But this year their stores had all been seized for taxes. The curious mud bins which are built for holding

corn and keeping it dry were lying, tumbled over, and empty, in every village we passed through. And in this particular Howara district, the corn land was but just sufficient for the people's wants in good years, because so much had been taken for sugar by the Khedive.

The Scot could not understand, he said, what his companions meant by saying that the Khedive had taken the people's land. Did he forcibly deprive them of it?

The Collector enlightened him by anecdotes of the different ways in which the matter was managed. The late Moofettish, Sadyk, who was murdered three years ago and his property appropriated, was an adept at this form of government. In some places, sufficiently remote, the land was simply seized. There was generally some arrear of taxes to be pleaded in case of any public notice being taken of the deed. In other places the land was bought. This was a very delicate operation and required several years' management. The people were first assessed a little more heavily than usual. Some remonstrance would perhaps be made, for even the worm will turn. Then the people would be told the land was wanted and a certain price would be promised them. Being perhaps reduced already to the lowest poverty they would consent—that is, where their formal consent was thought a matter of the slightest consequence. Then the factory would be run up, and for this forced

labour would be necessary. People who did not want to work for nothing could remit a part of the price of the land: or by the same device escape a fine, or a portion of the taxes. In many ways, such as these, the price of the poor people's land was soon made up; and when nothing can be recovered from the Khedive by legal process even in Cairo, it will be understood that up the country there was no remedy but resignation. It was the will of God—Kismet.

The Antiquary had heard of a further illustration of the working of the system, when he was up the Nile two years before. A deserted factory stood on the right bank: and one of the sailors who came from the neighbourhood told him that when the Khedive had acquired the land here in the usual way, that is to say, buying it but never paying for it, he found that sugar would not grow on it. So the people were ordered to buy it back again, and had to pay in hard cash.

The same man said that the whole performance was carried out by means of a special sheykh sent from head-quarters and put over the people instead of their own elected chief. This is possible enough, but I do not vouch for it.

He also told us of a man he knew who owned a camel. The camel was requisitioned to carry cane: and its owner started with it for the factory. But when he got half way he stabbed the camel with a dagger, and came home alone. The same man gave

us another illustration of paternal government. The land used to be revalued for taxation every six years, and if it was situated by the river, where the banks are altered by every inundation, the unfortunate farmer had often to pay for several years after his land had disappeared. Land left dry becomes the property of the village or "commune," and two years ago a sheykh was murdered by his own villagers for appropriating some common land to his own use. For this the village was burnt by the Khedive, who seized the land of the whole commune himself; and nothing can more plainly show the state of political degradation to which Turkish rule has reduced the country than that the punishment was looked upon as just, and acquiesced in without a murmur.

It was not easy to make any complete list of the taxes, or to understand the system on which they were worked. The fact is, there is—or may I say was?—no system. The Sheykh-el-beled was informed how much his village had to pay: but he assessed it among his people himself. Of course, therefore, he spared those who were his friends, those, that is, who had supported him when he was a candidate for his present office, and put it all on those who had opposed him. There was no appeal. A man might, it is true, complain to the Mudeer: but this would only be to make the sheykh his enemy for life, and in a little village community it would be

impossible for him to go back to his home: besides the chances were the Mudeer would give him a taste of the bastinado for insubordination.

The actual amount every one pays is therefore difficult to ascertain. No two accounts agreed. But the following seems to be a fairly accurate list of the payments to which a peasant in Egypt is liable. First, there is the *Land Tax*. We used to be told that the Khedive had abolished it. He certainly some years ago professed to promise its abolition on condition the people redeemed it. This forms the iniquitous Mookabala. Many of them were taken in by this device, and for years have been redeeming their Land Tax. It is now, 1879, 150 piastres per acre, or about 15*s*. This is called in Arabic "el Kharajeh." Secondly, there is the *Occupation Tax*, or *Wurkoh*. This is paid through the sheykh, who assesses it as he pleases, but it amounts on the average to about 10*s*. a head. Thirdly, there is the *Tezkareh*, a payment made by every man before he can be counted a citizen, or have any legal rights. This amounts to 31 piastres. Next there is the odious *Salt Tax:* that is to say, every man has to buy his salt from the Khedive, who has a monopoly of the manufacture, and very bad brown salt it is. Every man, woman, and child is bound to consume, or at least to buy, 10 piastres' worth of salt in the year.

Nor is this all. Besides individual or poll taxes like these, all the cattle are taxed, every article of

manufacture is taxed, and a man dare not wear even his rough cotton garment without a stamp on it. Finally, with true Turkish financial genius, a tax is imposed on palm trees, and even those which do not bear must be paid for. It has been well said that trees will not grow where the Turks come. The traveller in Egypt has but too many examples of the truth of the saying.

It was, of course, in the larger towns like How that we saw the worst cases of famine. The poor from other districts crowded from the villages to Girgeh, Soohag, Belianeh, or any place where there was a chance of backsheesh or any relief from passing strangers: and in this they were right, for, with few exceptions, the tourists on steamers and dahabeeahs did what they could to give relief. We afterwards heard terrible stories of the scenes our various friends saw, especially further up the Nile, but I am anxious not to put down here anything of which I have not actual personal knowledge. I do know, however, and wish to record it to their honour, that several of the dragomans sacrificed the greater part of their profits to feed the hungry.

Regular relief committees were afterwards established at different centres like Keneh, Luxor, Esneh, and others: but it was too late. The mischief was done months before. Mr. Rivers Wilson afterwards had the face to write to the *Times* that everything possible had been done and relief sent "two months

ago." This was in April, 1879. Yet in March, 1878, the famine was foretold in at least one English paper. The wicked liar who telegraphed to the English papers that the accounts of the famine were greatly exaggerated caused many deaths, and, rightly or wrongly, the lie was put down to the only person who could have benefited by it. But what are a more lies, or lives either, to him?

I find I am getting abusive and will stop. Other notes of the misery we saw are scattered through this journal. Meanwhile I will resume the regular narrative of our ride.

We lunched that day in a pleasant place, a long way from any town, but about a quarter of a mile from a little village called Semaineh. There was a well under a great spreading tree. The villagers probably paid for this unproductive lebbek tree on account of some superstition attaching to it. Evidently it was very sacred in their eyes. The great gnarled trunk was decorated with little votive flags here and there. In one fold of the bark there was quite a little oratory, with a lamp set in a niche. The roots grew above ground in large knees and formed capital seats for us: and two women coming down from the village to draw water were easily induced to draw also for us and our men.

We had now turned rather away from the bank.

[1] See Appendix.

Our idea had been to make two days march from Arábat to Dendera, but the delay on the first day rendered this hopeless now; and we were puzzled what to do. As we got further from How the mountain at whose foot the old city of Athor stood came plainly in sight, but it was a long way off: and a short cut across the desert for four or five hours would not be practicable after dark.

Hassan, indeed, contemplated this desert ride with great aversion, even in daylight: and did everything he could to prevent our making it. But we were determined on it, all the more because of the horrors we had passed through in the inhabited country. Besides, it was manifestly the short way to reach Dendera, as we could easily see by looking before us at the turn of the river and the prominence of the mountains towards the east.

But it seemed impossible to get so far to-night, and when it was only three o'clock we came to a clean, tidy, well-to-do-looking village called Marashteh, lying on the very edge of a sandy plain, backed by a fine chain of mountains. We saw few beggars, and when we stopped at the sheykh's house to ask his advice as to going on, we were received with great politeness. Altogether Marashteh dwelt long in our minds as one of the pleasantest places we had visited. The sheykh told us it would be impossible to get to Dendera that night, as it was fully five hours' march: and that there was no town or village along this

route at which we could stop for the night, except his. He therefore wanted us to pitch our tents in his garden. This we declined, but found a square space, marked out by low mud walls, which suited our purpose nicely.

The tent was no sooner up, with the open door looking across the desert, towards the blue mountains, than a little boy, about twelve, attended by a servant, came to see us. This, we were informed, was the sheykh's nephew; indeed, we understood that he was the heir to the family estates, and that the sheykh was only administering them for him until he should come of age. We were a little puzzled how to entertain him: but the Collector soon unpacked his musical box: and we bethought us of a certain little pot of cherry jam which had been regularly produced for luncheon every day, and as regularly put back untouched. Our young Arab looked supremely happy, but perfectly quiet and dignified, as he sat on one of our camp stools at the shady side of the tent, the musical box tinkling and trickling on the table, and a tin plate of cherry jam in his hand. He took his leave at last: walking solemnly round to us, one after the other, and kissing our hands.

Once more we composed ourselves to rest on our beds. The Collector sorted over the scarabs and coins he had bought in the last few days, the Antiquary lay with his eyes closed, discoursing vaguely on transliteration and the names of Dendera; the Scot

calculated the sheykh's probable income, and endeavoured to guess at the Arab laws which control the succession of property. It was very pleasant to have no sights to see: and, in fact, to find that our principal duty was to get as much rest as we could in the only idle afternoon we were likely to have for a long time to come. It was very pleasant, too, though it seems harsh to say so, to be, for once, out of reach of the sights and sounds which had beset our path in the morning. Marashteh was but a little place. The land was poor. There was no sugar cane. The level was higher than about How, and the inundation had done little harm. Then, too, the glorious dry air of the desert came fresh to us, and the Scot, who had never breathed it before, immediately began to feel, so he said, as if his foot was once more on his native heath. It was certainly most invigorating; and as the sun began to go down we agreed to walk across the sandy plain towards the mountains.

We soon passed under the telegraph wires which cut up the view from the tents, and then turning west walked towards the cloudless sunset, to where a few sont trees, some little grave mounds, and a ruined house, showed that a village and some cultivation had once existed. A deep well with a now dismantled wheel accounted for the traces of cultivation. No doubt the whole hamlet had been deserted not long ago; and it was but too easy to guess the reason. Villages where land is difficult to water, or

where the desert comes very near, cannot be kept going under the present pressure from the superior powers; but this, according to English newspapers, is to be called developing the resources of the country.

In the sont trees a magnificent peregrine falcon and her mate, a slighter and smaller bird, were flying about, and looked on us as strange intruders indeed, where no one had come perhaps since the village was deserted.

When we got back Hassan's face was in a glow of pride and satisfaction. The sheykh had sent in bread for the boys, and had then called himself. Finding we were out, he left word that he hoped we would allow him to send us a dinner, and that he intended to come and see us again. Even as Hassan spoke the dishes began to appear, and we had just time to send word that we hoped the sheykh would join us at dinner, when he appeared with several attendants,—a grave elderly man with a large hooked nose and a melancholy expression.

He was accompanied by his nephew, and both took their seats at our little table, with a quiet politeness such as one seldom sees even in good society in Europe. The Collector, who loved the Arabs, was charmed. "Think," he exclaimed, "of the grimaces and shrugs a Frenchman would go through on such an occasion. Yet the French are called polite. Give me Arab politeness. No fuss," &c., &c.

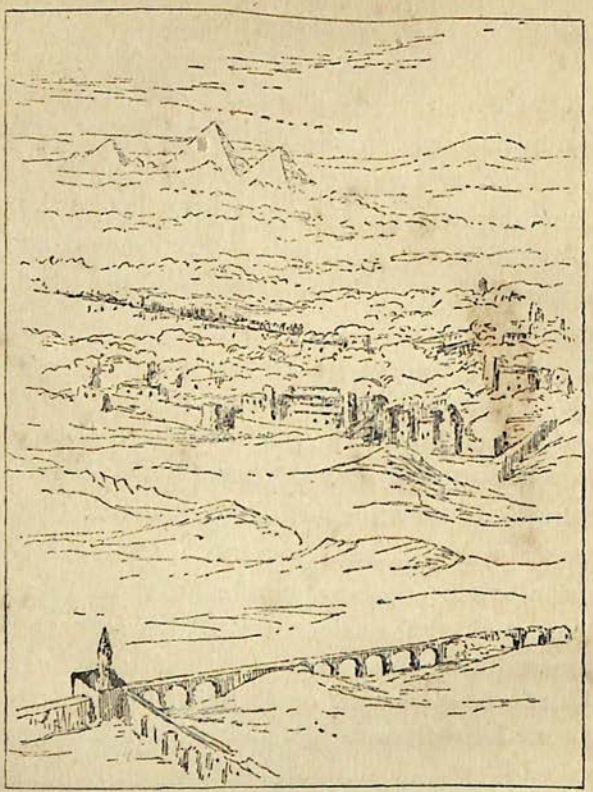
The first course consisted of our own soup, with which

the sheykh was greatly pleased. Then followed the dishes he had sent in, which were excellent and many, but as I did not write the *menu* down at the time, I am unable to remember anything but a kind of pickled radish, which both the Englishman and the Scot liked greatly, but which the Antiquary could not manage to eat.

They were surprised that the boy was allowed to sit down with his uncle. True, he went round and kissed his hand before he would sit down at the table, and probably asked his leave beforehand: but it is one of the prettiest features of Arab manners that sons never sit in their father's presence. On a subsequent occasion, when a young gentleman came to see us, and sat smoking for some time till his father arrived, he immediately rose and remained standing, and could not be prevailed on to finish his cigar, till he had gone formally and kissed his father's hand while he asked leave.

When dinner was over we were amused at the violent hiccoughs and eructations which the little boy made. He had eaten very little, being evidently shy, and unaccustomed to the use of knives and forks, but it seemed that these noises were intended to make us believe he had eaten so much that he could hardly keep it down.

Here, I think, the Collector would have preferred even French politeness.



THE PYRAMIDS FROM THE MOKATTEM.

CHAPTER XVI.

DENDERA.

The Desert—A Prize—Dendera—The Ferry—Camping Ground at Keneh—The Cook's Estate—The Inevitable Potentate.

THE next day was one of the most pleasant we had. After everything had been got ready for the start, and far more than the requisite number of guides and

guards had come together, we prepared to start. But at the last moment the Collector was detained. The others rode on, however, and he overtook them just as they emerged from the cultivated country upon the high sandy desert above the reach of the inundations. His face was sad. Evidently something had occurred, but he did not speak, and his companions seeing that probably some remarkable bargain was hovering in the balance, did not intrude on his secret thoughts. Presently a man overtook us, and walking beside the Collector's ass, talked to him in a low voice. They fell behind, and soon after we saw the Arab turn his back towards our cavalcade and take the road home. We delayed for a minute, and the Collector came up with his comrades. This time the expression of his countenance was changed. It was, so to speak, rippling with smiles, which, no matter what the subject on which we conversed, every now and then broke out at the lips and spread all over the face. About an hour he kept the secret, riding the while with his right hand every now and then thrust within his waistcoat and at once withdrawn. Presently he asked the Antiquary to ride a little apart with him for a moment.

This was, however, not so easily done. William hated secrets; and just at that point perceived in the distance some dear familiar face, and after violently agitating himself for a brief period with a see-saw motion rather like that of a rocking-horse, he set

up the loud whisper which was all he had left of his old bray, and starting off at an angle from the way he should go, was not brought back until the Collector, no longer able to contain himself, had told his story to the Scot.

That gentleman only made the tantalising remark that it was indeed very wonderful. The Irishman dismounted, and, letting William go where he listed, though he carried the annotated *Murray* in the saddle-bag, walked alongside the Collector until he had seen that wonderful thing. The Collector had certainly made a hit. The Wonderful Thing—it deserves capitals—was indeed such a treasure as few Collectors can ever hope to find. Should nothing else be found on the journey, this one treasure would make it not in vain.

Our feelings of exhilaration were enhanced by the desert air. On our right stretched the mountains—not the flat-topped mountain of which we had got so tired, but a range of varied outline, and showing here and there a peak of considerable pretensions to a decided outline. On the left our path sometimes approached very near the river, the arable land being here all at the opposite side. Ahead we saw the mountains of the other bank tending away towards the east, while the mountain on our side drew forward and shut us in.

"Dendera," said the Collector, "is just at the foot of the foremost spur. Nearly opposite, on the eastern

side of the Nile, is Keneh. That break in the eastern mountains, where they seem to dip below the desert horizon, is the pass which leads from Keneh to Cosseir, on the Red Sea. Formerly trade went to the Red Sea from Coos. Previously, during the time of the Pharaohs, it went from Gypt, or Coptos. They lie side by side in the valley to the south of Keneh. Soon you will see a row of whitewashed windmills on a hill. Keneh is just below them."

We were now once more on the black alluvial soil and among the fields of beans and pease. The green fields were full of life, swarming with herds, birds, and children. Here a half-naked boy with a following of little brothers and sisters, among whom one scanty suit of clothes seemed to have been distributed, superintended the grazing of the family buffalo. There a woman shrouded in blue, with an emaciated baby on her shoulder, endeavoured to concentrate the attention of her flock of sheep and goats upon one patch of grass. The sheep were brown, the goats black, and their human companions partook of both colours. A causeway of earth heaped up from the flat fields on both sides, wound among groves of lofty palms, and under the shade of green tamarisks, whose foliage had a soft feathery outline against the blue sky. A line of laughing girls, each bearing on her head an enormous earthen jar, caused us, with our donkeys, to draw aside from the path for a moment. They drew their hoods across their faces as they passed, but gazed at

us with unfeigned interest out of one black eye. Very often the extemporised veil dropped and revealed a brown, but not always ugly face, set off with necklaces and earrings of coloured beads, and tattooed on chin and forehead. A smiling mouth, and rows of magnificent white teeth redeemed the otherwise expressionless countenance, and our salute was returned politely without any disturbance of the well-balanced water-jar. It was evident we had reached the confines of the Howara country, in which for days we had hardly seen a woman's face, except that of a beggar.

At length, as one more heap of broken pottery was surmounted, the temple came in sight. We resisted long, but had to give in at last to the blandishments of an old, but not venerable man, with one eye, who seemed to have persuaded himself that he was the authorised guide to the temple. It was better to acquiesce, for he kept the others off; but his attentions were not very troublesome. It needs no one to point out the pylon, covered with life-sized kings and gods, which gives admittance to a long, narrow passage between modern brick walls, at the end of which is the portico. Some great red bees have made this pylon their own, and build little nests like thimbles in every recess of the sculpture. They seem to use the lime or sand from the stone, and burrow into its surface, destroying all they touch. Cleopatra, whose portrait at the back of the temple attracts many sight-seers to Dendera, is already pitted by them as if she

had suffered from small-pox, and soon there will be few open-air sculptures left on the walls. Two of us had seen the temple before, and we did not delay at the pylon to spell out the memorials of such modern monarchs as Domitian and Trajan. Roman emperors are too recent to be of much account in Egypt.

At Dendera, though some of the emperors took part in its completion, the Ptolemies are chiefly represented on the temple walls; and, when we reached the more ancient buildings at Thebes, we were able to judge how little the later Egyptian style varied in the thousands of years during which it prevailed. The difference between Dendera and Karnac is not as great as that between Westminster Abbey and St. Paul's, yet a period of twelve centuries divides them. At Dendera there is more symmetry perhaps than at Karnac; there is more haste to erect a complete temple, more regard to effect, and less to endurance. The sculptures, too, have not the delicacy and, so to speak, the sobriety of those on the older walls. Sometimes the processions, the lines of trophies, the rows of emblems, are arranged more with an eye to ornament, and the walls are too distinctly divided by cornices and dados. But the difference is not such as to prevent the later work from being a typical Egyptian temple as much as the older one; a place in which the arrangement may be studied with advantage, and the features common to all alike traced out and identified. The gloom of the interior, when once the

entrance with its four-and-twenty columns has been passed, the vast size of the blocks of stone, the large scale of all the architectural details, the simplicity of the construction, and the lavish use of ornament, nowhere prominent but everywhere present, are enough to distinguish the style from that of any other country. The portico itself is now underground. The ancient city, made probably, like all Egyptian cities, chiefly of crude brick, crumbled round the solid stone building; and a second, an Arab town, rose on the ruinous heaps, invading the sacred inclosure, and at length climbing even over the temple itself. Such has been the fate of Esneh and of Edfoo, as well as of Dendera, and in each instance the temple, covered in and overlaid by the mud huts of twenty centuries, has been preserved until our own day. One of M. Mariette's first antiquarian enterprises was to unearth Edfoo. Esneh is still half buried in the midst of the modern town. But at Dendera even the town has perished, and only mounds, graves, and broken pottery remain to tell of its having existed.

The columns, as we descended to the ancient level, seemed to grow and expand, until, as we stood on the floor in the half light, they rose like a gigantic forest around us. As our eyes got accustomed to the gloom we saw the images of old kings looking down from the walls, everywhere praying to the goddess, the beautiful Athor, who ruled the return of the year and the rising of Sirius, to whom mortals

owed all that was true and loving and good, either in earth or heaven. Here in the porch her priests annually assembled from the dark chambers beyond, and prepared to make their procession round the outer court in the presence of the people. They brought out the sacred barges from the sanctuary, the banners and the standards from the store chambers, the golden vases from the treasury, the shields and halberds from the armoury. They threaded their way among the dark passages and in single file up the narrow stair to the little temple on the roof, where twelve columns symbolised the twelve months, and where sacrifice was done to the returning year. Next, passing through the chamber where Isis wept for the dead Osiris, they sang their long-drawn lament, exchanging it at last into a hymn of joy as they passed through the hall of the resurrection and descended the stair once more. We peeped into the shrine in which the emblem of the goddess was preserved, the golden *sistrum* upon which only a king might look. We clambered over the roof in the blazing sunshine, and wondered how the priests could bear the heat of July when in midwinter it was like this. We endeavoured to make out the symbolism on the twelve columns of Sothis, and to distinguish the chamber of Osiris dead from that of Osiris alive again. We sought in vain for the secret passages of which the guide-books tell, for all the passages seemed to be more or less secret. Then, as, weary of gazing, we sat down at the foot

of a pillar, we tried to realise the age of the temple. It is modern, in Egypt. Yet was it not begun before the dawn of history in that little island of the north from which we have made our pilgrimage? Ptolemy Auletes reigned in Egypt; Cæsar was not yet born. And was it not finished during that life from which we reckon our Christian centuries? Tiberius was the master of Rome and Egypt alike; England had not yet come into being. Yet Dendera is modern.

We lunched under the pylon and then took our way to the ferry. The green fields were pleasant after the sandy desert, but not so a Fellah village, a miserable heap of low mud walls, without doors, roofs, or windows, but rising here and there into a tall pigeon tower formed of crocks embedded, tier over tier, in the mud wall. Fallen houses were frequent, where pots, whole or broken, lay half hidden in dust, and the wild dove flew out, glancing in the sunshine as we passed. It is a pretty bird, its colours bright and pleasing, and though it "lies among the pots," the appropriateness of David's allusion is the more manifest. Neither doves nor pigeons appear to be wholly domesticated; the fellah seldom indulges in animal food, but the passing tourist is at liberty to shoot for himself the materials for a pie without the slightest opposition. Close adjoining the village great mounds of mingled earth and potsherds mark the site of the

ancient town, and present another example of the form which Egyptian domestic ruins everywhere take. The crude brick has crumbled away into dry brown dust, and though stone and burnt brick may in some places be concealed, digging among such heaps seldom reveals anything to repay the trouble of the task. The natives gather the mould and sift or wash it for the nitre with which it is impregnated, and great flat basins for evaporation are near the mounds. They are part of a powder factory which the Khedive has imposed on this part of the country; and many naked Arabs on donkeys cantered past with their panniers, or overtook us from the ruins laden with the nitrous dust. One of them stopped to offer some *anteeka* which he had found, and whispered a sentence in which we only distinguished "scarabée" and "backsheesh." The donkeys were now and then varied by a camel, who looked more at home with his soft-cushioned feet, his noiseless solemn tread, and the sneer which nature has imprinted on his dry, dun-coloured face. He snarls like a dog when his master touches him, and shows his formidable teeth if the stranger comes too near. He is ugly, cross, untameable, discontented, but to the northern traveller at least, always interesting.

Far away, beyond the green fields, where the stony heights come down in great buttresses to the strip of sandy desert at their feet, we saw, while we were on the roof, two or three young camels at home.

They trotted or even galloped through the burning sunshine, chased each other for miles along the glowing waste, throwing up behind them clouds of blinding dust, till they looked like ghosts gliding through a shadowless land. There is something strangely fascinating about them—so unlike other animals, yet so evidently suited to the country to which they belong. Just as wild, but far less interesting, were the dogs. In Upper Egypt at least, they are often as fierce as they are hideous. In Cairo they are a down-trodden race; but in the country they show more independence. South of Thebes, indeed, they are to a certain extent domesticated, and even as low as Dendera they help to guard, if not to guide, the flocks. Between them and the children there is a kind of alliance. On the village dirt-heap both sleep side by side in the shade of the same wall. The same flies creep round the eyes of each, but of the two the dog is the cleaner and the less disgusting.

At length, after half-an-hour's ride we reached the bank. The baggage had gone before us, and we expected as soon as we got to Keneh to find our tents pitched and everything comfortable. Nor were we disappointed. It took a long time to get our donkeys into the ferry-boat, whose high sides would puzzle even a hunter. William Rufus, when once convinced that it was inevitable leaped in with characteristic lightness. The others were lifted by the fore-legs and their feet put over the bulwark. Next

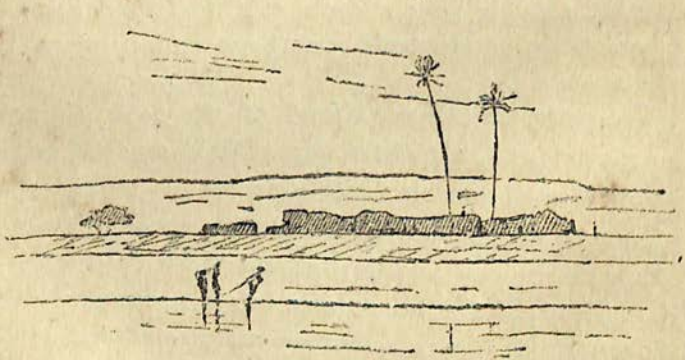
their hinder parts were similarly hoisted by means of the tail which must have been nearly pulled out in the process. There was a moment of suspense, as the unhappy donkey hung wavering across the gunwale, but eventually all tumbled headlong in the right direction, and only too soon we were landed at the *Sahil*, or port of Keneh.

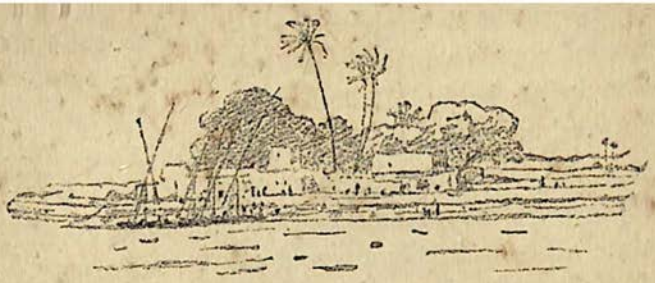
We found our tents at a place where the people come to draw water from the wide canal which here looks like the Nile itself. Overhead was one of the magnificent lebbek trees which Turks have made so rare in Egypt, and altogther the situation was well chosen and pleasant, if a little too low and near the water. When we asked why this spot had been chosen we were told that it formed the modest patrimony of our cook, who was a landed proprietor at Keneh, though only a cook at Cairo: and he had "personally conducted" our boys and baggage to the spot.

We were not all very fond of the cook, though he cooked well, but there was a little modest pride about him at Keneh which was by no means displeasing. When the inevitable governor came to dine with us we made him acquainted with the fact. He summoned the happy man into his presence, and addressed to him a complimentary speech, upon which our landlord struck an attitude and recited a verse —just as they do in the *Arabian Nights*.

From this point on our journey governors and

other potentates were our lot and portion. They all told the same tale about the famine. At Keneh relief had been given to as many as 6,000 or more at a time, for some weeks, but in this district things had much improved: at least so said our informant, and we hoped it was true. We certainly did not see the same aspect of misery on the people's faces, and it was only to be expected that the further we got south the less we should see of famine. In this idea, as it turned out, we were wholly wrong. The famine was quite as bad a month later, and fifty miles further south, at Erment. It is impossible not to put two and two together, to argue *post* and *propter*, when we remember that the largest sugar factory above Farshoot is at Erment.





CHAPTER XVII.

GYPT.

Keneh—Coptos—Copts—"Backsheesh Keteer"—The Ruins of Gypt—The Name of Egypt—A Lecture—Goos—Early to Bed—A Rembrandtesque Effect.

THERE was not much to delay us at Keneh. Few *anteekas*, and no sights are there, and the tent was struck at an early hour next morning. We were sorry to find that our road was to be all through the lowlands. It was, however, as we pushed on, so picturesque on both sides, and increased so fast in antiquarian and historical interest, that our day was very pleasantly spent, especially as neither at Gypt nor at Goos did we see more than the average amount of poverty to which the shortest stay in Egypt familiarises a traveller. There was a pretty garden on the left hand of our path for a long way, with orange-trees, and even a few rose-bushes. This passed,

we descended to the river's edge, and stopped for a few minutes in a little town where the weekly market was being held. We bought a few bracelets and scarabs, and the Collector found a glass coin or weight, which pleased him very much. But the Antiquary was anxious to press on, as he feared the time allotted to Gypt would not be sufficient. The Collector, who knew this district well, reassured him on the point. He would find very little to delay him, notwithstanding the paramount historical importance of the place.

And so it proved. We stopped at Gypt for luncheon. It stands on the edge of a wide canal. We dismounted, after crossing an ancient bridge into which a tablet of Ptolemaic date is built, and entered the market-place. The "elders of Gypt" were sitting in a kind of covered recess in a wall facing the open place, smoking and chatting. Every second person we saw seemed to be, as was only appropriate, a Copt. We asked, as usual, for *anteekas*, but nothing was brought, beyond a few coins and scarabs, one of which, though it looked like a forgery, the Antiquary bought. It must, if a cast, have been cast from an older pattern, and was of interest as showing a Christian *Tau cross*, supported by serpents.

After luncheon, which was much impeded by the curiosity of inquisitive inhabitants, we set off to visit the ruins. The "Arab" who conducted us announced himself as a Christian. So did a boy who helped him

with his English. So did a beggar who followed in our train. In short, whether from interested motives or pride, from truth or falsehood, about two-thirds of the people we met or spoke to professed the same religion.

One of these Copts was very anxious to draw the Collector aside and show him some remarkable antiquities recently discovered. He was evidently afraid any one should know where they were. At last we arranged to separate. The Collector was to go by himself with the Copt. His friends were to visit the ruins. But as he disappeared towards a suburban village, they perceived that half the crowd followed him. It was evident that this arrangement would not act, when a happy thought suddenly occurred to the Scot. He sat down on a wall and loudly proclaimed the immediate probability of a liberal distribution of backsheesh. Fortunately his pocket was well-lined with copper, and the first or second exhibition of a coin worth three-quarters of a farthing reduced the Collector's *cortége* to a couple of Copts.

The Antiquary and the Scot then proceeded, amid vehement demands for more backsheesh, to an inspection of the temple of Amen-Chem, or rather of the few granite blocks bearing the name of Thothmes III. which show its former situation, and the recently uncovered pillars which indicate the existence of a Christian church on the ancient site. Round the whole precinct were the remains of a lofty brick wall,

which it was evident had for centuries formed a refuge and free building ground to generation after generation of Christians.

Amid this scene of utter ruin the Antiquary sat down, and, time not being precious, held forth to a congregation consisting of some fifty children, half-a-dozen men loading donkeys with dust, and the Scot. Gypt, he said, was to him the most interesting city in Upper Egypt after Abood and This. What This was to the ancient civilisation, Gypt was to the middle monarchy. Here, facing the pass to the Red Sea, the old monarchy was revived, and the glories of Thebes were the direct offspring of the wealth of Gypt.

"But," objected the Scot, "you surely do not mean to derive the name of the whole country from that of this wretched little place?"

"Seriously, I do. On this wise:—The old name of Egypt—the country—was Ham, or Kam. You cannot derive Egypt from Ham; neither can you derive it from Misraim, the Hebrew name. Nor, I conceive, does the derivation suggested by Signor Maspero commend itself to your inner consciousness. He makes it come from Mennefer."

"Memphis, do you mean?"

"Yes. Mennefer, or as Maspero spells it, Mannovver, —the good place—was sacred to the god Ptah, who gave it the holy name—for every Egyptian town had its holy name—of *haka-ptah*, the dwelling of Ptah, and of this, says Signor Maspero, the Greeks made Egypt."

"I do not know anything about the words, but it seems to me," said the Scot, "twice as easy and much more obvious to derive it from Gypt."

"Yes. And there is nothing in Maspero's conjecture to account for the existence and name of the Gypti, or Gypts, whom one meets not here in particular, nor at Memphis, nor in Cairo, but everywhere from Alexandria to Assooan."

"Allowing the antecedent possibility of this derivation," asked the Scot, "can you account in any way for the application of the name to all Egypt?"

"Yes, I think I can. You have only to look round you to see the reason. There was a time in the affairs of the old double kingdom of Kam when foreigners held the Delta——"

"Oh! I know; the Hyksos, of course."

"Not the Hyksos. No; long, many centuries, before the Hyksos. I am speaking of the time after the fall of the sixth dynasty, and before the rise of the twelfth. The Hyksos were in Egypt under the thirteenth dynasty. But after the sixth dynasty the foreigners invaded the lower country, and the lawful line, most of whom bore, it seems, the names of Enentef, or Mentuhotep, reigned somewhere in this region, being in very deed but princes or kinglets. They seem, however, to have founded Thebes, as the older kings of This had founded Memphis; and the tombs of two or three of them have been opened in the necropolis there. Gypt must have been their

chief town, or the chief town of several of them, for they were many, perhaps as many as twenty, and in troubled times they did not remain fixed in one place.

"Copt, or Gypt, then, was of importance on account of its situation at the head of the valley yonder. The foreigners in the Delta had shut up the road to the Mediterranean, but while the kings of Thebes held the Gyptian valley, they could get out towards the Red Sea, and by this road the riches of Arabia and India came to meet the still lingering civilisation of Kam.

"Trade, in the course of centuries, made them rich. Riches made them powerful. At length Mentuhotep IV. arose. He is known also by two other names, Ranebtavi, 'the sun, the lord of the land,' and Nebkerra, the title assigned to him on the Table of Abood. He appears in many places, along this valley, up at the cataract, in the graves of Thebes, and his successor is known to have sent an armed force to keep open this road.

"Thus it was that the old monarchy was identified in the minds, not only of the dwellers in the Delta, but also in those of the traders along the Red Sea coast, with Gypt, and when, under the first kings of the twelfth dynasty, a force which proceeded from this upper region overcame and drove out the strangers, it is no wonder that the newly-united kingdom became known throughout the world by the name of this city."

"It strikes me," said the Scot, "that you had better leave off there. You will soon land yourself in the maze if you go on to treat of the causes of Pelasgian migration, of Phœnician settlements in the north and west, of the influences of Egyptian learning on Athens and Abraham, for I suppose the Pharaoh whom Abraham visited was one of the kings of the Delta."

Thus warned, the Antiquary stopped, reserving some remarks on the worship of Amen till they should be at Karnac.

At length the Collector appeared, but his face did not wear that expression of quiet satisfaction which betrayed a good find. Still hope remained, for a Copt, who had passed us a few minutes before and gone on along the road, was, it seemed, the owner, or an emissary of the owner, of something "very wonderful," and only waited to get safe out of the town in order to show the treasures he had for sale. So we mounted and rode on.

We shortly overtook the Copt, and the Collector waited behind with him. They conversed mysteriously side by side for a long way, and when the baggage came up we sent it on, and lingered ourselves by the way. In the far distance behind us we saw the Collector dismount and sit down under a hillock with his companion. We were not unwilling to delay. The donkeys, which had kept up so bravely until now, began to exhibit plain signs of fatigue. Why they should do so now, after two

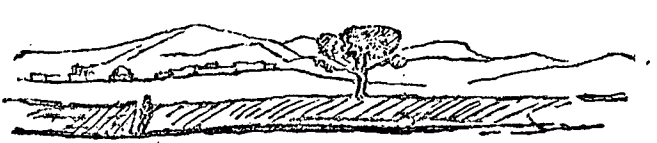
comparatively easy days, we could not understand. Even William showed his unquenchable vivacity only by insisting on constantly creeping out of the road to one side, and it took a whole drove of the most attractive asses to extract from him more than a pointing of the ears and a long-drawn sigh. We did not know, till the end of the journey the next day, what was the cause of this unwonted conduct. Then we discovered, to our vexation, that owing to the neglect of the donkey-boys, or to some cause beyond their control, the poor brutes had, one after the other, acquired galled withers; and it was a shocking blister on one side that made our poor William try to escape from his sufferings by going to the other.

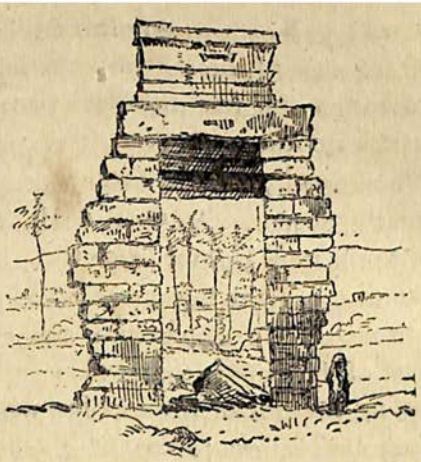
Presently our friend overtook us. His face still wore an air of disappointment. The Copt either would not, or could not, show anything except a few beads and a little silver amulet of no value. "He had nothing about him either," added the Collector, wearily, "for I insisted on patting him all over."

We soon reached Goos, or Coos: and there, having passed through a large but most desolate-looking town, found our camp in a lovely grove of palms, on clean, green grass; the table ready, and the appetising fumes of a splendid dinner already scenting the gale. But hot water was first the order of the day. With a portion thereof we had each a bath, and the residue made us a cup of tea.

Already we knew by certain clear indications that we were approaching Luxor. One of these was the increased price of the few *anteekas* we were offered for sale, and another the constant presence, in every string of beads, of the forged scarabs which I have already described.[1] One Arab, or perhaps Turk, for he affected European clothes, brought an immense supply, several hundreds at least, and all of them forgeries. We drove him away with such open marks of ignominy that we were not much troubled during the rest of the evening with what the owners themselves knew to be false. I remember very little after half-past eight, but awaking some hours later saw the Collector still examining a store of curiosities and two turbaned natives drinking coffee and watching his expression with keen eyes. The effect was Rembrandtesque in the extreme—"Nicodemus," or "Robbers dividing their spoils,"—wonderful chiaroscuro,—but, nothing puts one to sleep like staring at a candle.

[1] See p. 146.





PYLON OF NECTANEBO.

CHAPTER XVIII.

AMEN.

Shenhoor—A Martyr's Grave—A Mirage—A Sandstorm—The View of Karnac—The Dedication of the Temple—Amen, Lord of Poont—Hymn to Amen-Ra—Karnac, a Christian Church—The Obelisks of Hatasoo—The Ride ended.

WE had not ridden many miles from Goos before we entered the great circle of mountains which is round about Thebes. Towards eleven o'clock we reached a canal which seems to mark the corner at which the river turns for its great bend past Keneh. Northward of this point it runs towards the west—

southward, its course is almost directly north. The passage of the canal was found impossible till we came down to the shore of the Nile, and even there, though the mouth is very shallow to retain the water after the inundation, the banks are so high that we had to get off our donkeys and lead them over.

We now steered for Shenhoor, where the tall minaret has been aptly compared to an Irish round tower. These towers are common on the mosques of the upper country, but this one, being the only tall building in the neighbourhood, is very conspicuous. It lies three miles or more from the Nile, and is little visited by travellers, who in their upward voyage are in a hurry to see Karnac, and on their return are generally sick of temples. But the little temple of Shenhoor, the "abode of Horus," is worth a visit. It is a mere miniature building, but wonderfully perfect. It is not easy to understand how it escaped the Christian iconoclasts of the fourth century, for a Christian church, of which few remnants are now visible, stood just in front. The Collector suggested that it was because its precincts had been used as a burial-place by the Christians, a theory borne out by his discovery on the south wall of a little circular wreath of laurel, which in his opinion marked the grave of a martyr.

From the roof of the little temple, which bears in many places the oval of Tiberius, we caught our first sight of the great pylons of Karnac. They were

only visible to eyes that had seen them before, but a few miles further the Scot, too, was able to descry them, and then, indeed, under very surprising circumstances.

He had just observed to the Englishman that he had not yet, since his coming to Egypt, seen a really good mirage.

"The first time I came to Luxor," he replied, "my first view of Karnac showed it surrounded by an immense lake in which the tall obelisk and the pylons were reflected. As we came nearer, the lake seemed to dry up before our very eyes, and we found it had been a mirage."

Hardly had he told us of it when we actually saw the same vision, except that the water was a mere strip, and there was no distinct reflection. I dare say, owing to the low ground on the north side of Karnac, such mirages are common enough when the hot wind blows, and indeed no hotter wind ever blew than on that very afternoon of the 23rd January.

It was, fortunately for us, the only very hot or dusty day we had encountered on our long ride. There had till then been always a cool wind to temper the heat of the sun, and it was only from about three o'clock till just before sunset that we had ever found the heat oppressive. Indeed, during the mornings up to ten or eleven, the wind was only too cold, blowing as it did always from the north and on our backs, which were often chilled, while the sun literally

ried our faces. Indeed the Irishman, whose native climate had not accustomed him to much sunshine, and who only wore a fez, or red felt cap, during the ride, had been sunburnt to such an extent that at sunset every day he had been obliged to wash his bleeding face in milk, to mitigate the pain, and was now riding into a civilised region and the society of Europeans with the skin hanging in tatters from his cheeks and forehead, while his nose presented the appearance of an uncooked beef-steak.

These were among the worst annoyances of our ride, for we were little troubled by flies, and not at all by mosquitoes.

The saddle-bags, well stuffed out with clothes, were by no means uncomfortable to ride upon, and a small pillow, while it did not greatly add to the weight on the donkey, was an occasional relief when blisters were threatened.

But now, though the heat was greater than ever, the sand made half the sky dark, and

"The sun's eye had a sickly glare."

The pylons seemed to recede from us as we approached, and when at length a turn of the road concealed them for a few minutes, we had no idea we were so close upon them. Then they burst on our astonished gaze towering above our heads, and totally dwarfing the minaret of a little mosque which crouches at their feet.

In fact, this is the best side from which to approach Karnac, as there is nothing for miles to obstruct the view of the length of the great temple, except the pylon of the smaller temple to the north, which only serves, great as it is, to give the eye a measure for the greater objects beyond. Far to the left is the pylon of Nectanebo. Next, in the centre, rises the great obelisk of Hatasoo looking pink and fresh among all the ruins. To the right is the smaller obelisk, almost concealed by the mighty mass of the Hall of Columns. A long interval, marked only by the solitary standing pillar of Psamtik, intervenes between it and the unfinished but enormous pylons of Ptolemy.

"I should like to ask," said the Scot, with some hesitation, "that is to say, I have forgotten, to what deity this great temple is dedicated."

"To Amen," answered the Collector, promptly.

"Sir," said the Antiquary, with great solemnity, and in a dogmatic tone, "there is not a temple dedicated to Amen in Egypt."

This statement seemed to surprise his companions, and though he at once went on to explain, I do not undertake to promise for either of them that the long lecture he delivered made nearly as much impression on them as its text.

In effect his views were much as follows, and were repeated when, a few days later, the Scot and he, in company with a charming little party of very

inquiring Americans, revisited Karnac, and sat for an hour on the top of the northern pylon, looking across the Nile towards the Theban mountains, and endeavouring by the golden light of a glorious sunset to fill the middle distance with the buildings of a mighty city, and to picture the procession of a king's funeral crossing the blue river and winding on its way to the narrow Valley of the Shadow of Death, whose rocky gate they could but just make out on the face of the yellow cliff beyond :—

The word Amen means the *Concealed.* His name was never pronounced. We do not even know what it was. In this respect it reminds us of the Hebrew name of God. Amen entered into the composition of the word *Amenti,* the under world, long ages before it was used to designate the Invisible God by the Egyptians of the eleventh and subsequent dynasties. We meet with it in the Boolak Museum on monuments, which may be as early as the eleventh dynasty, in the name of Amenemhat ; and in the tablet (No. 44) which contains the epitaph of Enentef, a dignitary of the court under first Osirtasen, where his son is mentioned as Ameni. The same was also the name of a lady, the mother of Ra-Kheper-Ka, another courtier of this period. It also forms part of the name, Amenemhat, of the occupant of the first tomb at Beni Hassan, who had probably been called after the founder of the twelfth dynasty. The worship of Amen must have come in under the later kings of

the eleventh dynasty, but is not mentioned at all in many stelas and other inscriptions of a long subsequent period.

How did this new religion—for it is nothing less—of Amen come into Egypt, and why did it assume such importance? There can be no doubt it came from beyond the sea, because Amen, when he is referred to alone, is often styled Lord of Poont. Poont, as Brugsch has almost proved, is the opposite coast of Arabia. It was, after this time, looked upon as a holy land by the Egyptians, the land whence all things good and sacred came. The road through the hills from Gypt, along the valley of Hamamat, is full of votive inscriptions, and the merchant princes of the Thebaid, who prayed to the protector, the great god Chem, Lord of Copt, recorded their vows on the rocks in their outward journey. Perhaps it was on their return that they first united with it the name of Amen. Before the end of the twelfth dynasty it had become customary throughout Egypt to acknowledge the supremacy of the "hidden God," and all the old deities of the land were one by one reckoned as his representatives, and, so to speak, as incarnations or manifestations of the attributes of Amen.

From Poont also came his satellite Bes, whom the Greeks and Romans identified, perhaps rightly, with Bacchus, and in later times the hideous images of Ptah, as a hydrocephalic infant, were often

confounded with those of the more mature, but not less hideous Bes. But in his higher character Ptah was sometimes called the father of Amen, and often Amen-Ptah, just as we read of Amen-Ra, Amen-Chem, Amen-Noom, and even Amen-Asar, or Osiris, and Amen-Hor, or Horus.

Among all these forms of Amen, or visible attributes of Amen, that of Amen-Ra, or Amen the sun, is so usually supreme, that almost all modern writers on the mythology of Egypt have treated this combination as if it meant Amen alone. But, though Karnac contains many representations of the god, it is rather to Amen-Chem, the first of these unions, that we must assign the dedication of the temple. In this form, the most offensive to modern eyes, he is sculptured, not only on every pillar of Seti's mighty hall, but on every stone of the granite sanctuary. Sometimes the so-called great triad of Thebes consists of Amen-Ra, Maut, the universal Mother, and Khons. Sometimes Amen is united with Noom, the ram-headed local god, and under this form, which the Greeks and Romans chiefly affected, he was identified as Jupiter Ammon. It was in honour of Amen Noom that Darius built the temple of Kargeh in the great oasis, but there as in all the temples, Amen is alternately joined with numberless other and, so far, secondary deities. The fable which made Alexander claim Zeus for his father further led, through this god of the Egyptians, to the production of the

horns on the head of that king as shown on his well-known coins.

In the smaller temples which surround the central building at Karnac, Amen was worshipped in one of the subsidiary forms, and to the veneration of Knoom in particular the ram-headed sphinxes on either side of the avenue to Luxor must be ascribed.

Some have endeavoured to see in this cult of the Hidden God a proof that the "Ancient Egyptians" had ideas of monotheism; others have considered it indicative of their pantheism. I do not attempt to decide, because I have not been able, apart from the intrinsic difficulties of the question to discover what these writers and others mean by the term, so often loosely used, of "Ancient Egyptians."

Certain it is that Amen is never worshipped alone; that he was generally unknown in Egypt before the time of the twelfth dynasty, when every district had its own god, and also honoured Osiris; and that, though the introduction of his name shows a foreign influence—a reforming influence if you will—from without, the religion of the ordinary native was originally a fetish worship of some animal, and the new ideal was very soon so debased through its influence that the theology of the later Rameses and Ptolemies rose no higher towards a monotheistic creed than that of the Ancient Monarchy of the pyramid-builders.

In the magnificent hymn to Amen-Ra which Mr. Goodwin contributed to the second volume of the

Records of the Past, and which must be as old as the nineteenth dynasty, he is addressed alternately as the sun (Ra), the bull of An (Heliopolis), the chief in Thebes, the Prince of Poont, the chief of all the gods, the son of Ptah; as Chem, as Cheper-Ra, as Toom, as Horus, and as the ruler of men.

> "Whose name is hidden from his creatures
> In his name, which is Amen."

The Scot and the Antiquary lunched very uncomfortably, in a shower of blinding sand, just within the pylons of Karnac. The wind fell a little before long and they made a short tour round the principal features of interest. Though the Irishman had often "done" the temple before, he had never till to-day observed marks, in what may be called the transept of Thothmes, of its having been once a Christian church. The columns bear in several places the figures of old saints, and on two are grooves made evidently for the insertion of a movable screen. Though it is not easy at first to make out the paintings, mixed up as are the features of the saints with the hieroglyphs of older but more permanent workmanship, when you have once caught sight of them they seem to haunt you, and peep out from all kinds of unexpected places.

After the Hall of Columns, the Scot was, I think, most impressed with the fallen obelisk of Hatasoo. It is much more possible to judge of the size of the

standing obelisk by looking at the broken fragments, for even the thin taper top is so wide that a man of six feet high cannot reach from corner to corner of one side. The inscription appears to have been identical on both obelisks, which careful measurements show to have been as nearly as possible of the same size. Hatasoo erected them to the memory of her father, Thothmes I., whom she seems to identify with Amen :—

"The mistress of both crowns,
The good and great,
The female Hor,
The godhead of the diadems,
The queen and mistress of both worlds,
Ra ma Ka (the Sun, the living image of Justice)
Has erected this
As her monument
To her father Amen,
The lord of the thrones of the world :
She has set up for him
Two great obelisks
Before the beautiful pylon
Of Amen-Noom the Great.
Adorned with pure gold,
Thickly and plenteously :
She has enlightened Egypt,
Even as the sunshine.
Never the like
Has a ruler done
As she has done :
She the Son (*sic*) of the Sun,
Amen-Knoom-t Hatasoo
The dispenser of Life."

On the other side she is more explicit :—

> " The beloved of Amen Ra,
> Her majesty has caused to be set
> The name of her father
> On this monument,
> Which is the greater because it bears the praise
> Of the king, the lord of the two Lands,
> *Ra-Cheper-Ka.*"

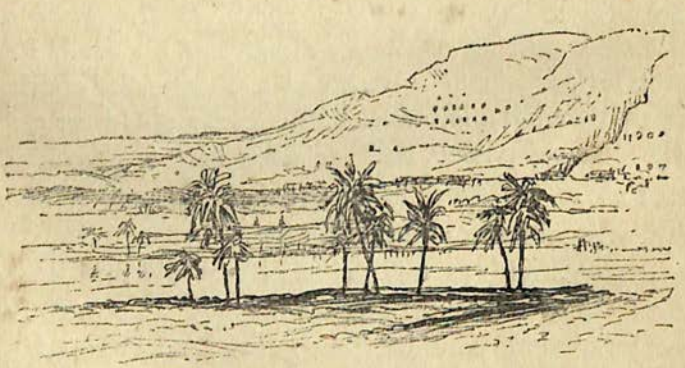
This is the throne name of Thothmes I., and seems to mean "The likeness of the Sun, the Creator." The inscription on the base contains particulars of the removal from Syene, which occupied seven months, and from certain expressions leads us to infer that the whole monolith was covered with gilding.

At length we turned to continue our way to Luxor. Strange to say at the entering in of the Hall of Columns we met the beauty and her husband, but mindful perhaps of our refusal to receive the courier on that memorable occasion, the lovely eyes were cast down as we passed, and we were neither permitted to bask in the sunshine of her smile, nor to receive any recognition from her satellites.

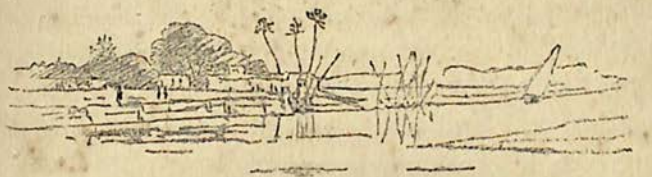
I am afraid, to tell the truth, we did not know the faces of our acquaintances till they were past, for we were both anxious, though we had lingered in Karnac, to reach Luxor, and see our friends and receive our letters as soon as possible. But it seemed a little strange not so much as to speak with the first Europeans we had seen for two hundred miles.

Refreshed by the two hours' rest in the temple, our donkeys were able to enter Luxor at a trot without the ignominious stimulant of a thrashing, and we were glad to find that the Collector, who had gone on while we were lunching, had the tent already pitched in a charming palm grove behind the new hotel, well away from the town, and commanding a lovely view of the three peaks of the eastern mountain.

Our ride had taken eight days, the actual distance by river being two hundred miles and a half: so that our daily average was about twenty-five miles, for of course what we made in avoiding bends, we lost by excursions like that to Abood.



THEBES FROM KARNAC.



A NILE VILLAGE.

CHAPTER XIX.

LUXOR.

Dwelling in Tents—Native Society—Poets—Music—An Arabian Night—The Remains of the 18th and 19th Dynasties—Bulls' Eyes—A Fright at Dinner—Hiring a Boat—Death at the Hotel—A Funeral—The Copt Church—The Cemetery.

I HAVE no intention of prolonging a detailed diurnal of our eight days' stay at Luxor. We found many people there whom we knew, in the hotel or on board the steamers and dahabeeahs which were constantly coming and going on the way up and down the river, and in their company we "did" the regular sights.

The chief excursions from Luxor, to Medinet Aboo, the tombs of the kings, and Karnac, have all been so well and so often described that I need say little about them. We joined Cook's party on more than one occasion and found old friends among them: we dined with the native big-wigs and

little wigs; we entertained on our own account, for everybody was anxious to inspect our tents and taste even for a few hours of camp life: we bought *anteekas* real and spurious: in short, we enjoyed Luxor to a considerable extent, and should have enjoyed it much more but for a mournful event which occurred just at the end of our stay.

The native society amused us most, though we did not take readily to eating with our fingers. At one of these dinners we had an *effendi* present who passed for a wit among his fellows. He showed his talent by reciting a verse at the shortest notice, and considering how easy verse-making is in Arabic purchased his reputation very cheaply. On being asked for a sentiment referring to us he replied at once,—

"One night when guests of honour are present is in value better than a thousand."

This remarkable intellectual effort certainly received all the applause it merited. The Collector remembered on one occasion that a great man had bidden him, and "sent his servant at supper-time" to make an announcement in the following terms:—

"The marriage has been celebrated, the feast is ready, and we only wait for the rising of the full moon."

We had many examples of Arabic poetry on our journey very superior to these, and sometimes endeavoured to translate them, but with indifferent success. The point was usually very small. Our sailors, on the

way down, had a favourite song, which never failed to encourage them during the fatigues of a hard day's rowing. The whole "argument" was this, "A son said to his father, 'Get me the little white girl in marriage, or I will go and enlist in the army.'" This not very complicated story was so spun out with choruses and other embellishments, many of them extempore, as to last nearly an hour.

In Cairo, one day, during the Moolid e' Nebi, I remember stopping to listen to an improvising singer, and was much amused to hear him at once make up a verse in honour or in derision, I was not sure which, of *El howaga:* it was rapturously received by the rest of the audience, and the refrain was chanted with great vigour at short intervals until I retired.

The strange wild music of the Nile is like nothing else I know, but every man, woman, and child seems to have a natural gift, and you hear what we should call glees and catches sung without difficulty—always in admirable time, but as to tune, I, for one, do not feel myself entitled to speak. I doubt, indeed, if any European can learn the Egyptian gamut by ear, but it has its merits, and is unquestionably preferable to the best attempts made by one of the Khedive's bands in the Esbekeeyah Gardens, to play Italian opera music.

Men working at a shadoof have a beautiful wild cadence, a single strain, ending in a trill, which is more like the song of a bird than any human music.

It seems universal in Upper Egypt: but I heard it best executed on the river-path between Karnac and Luxor, and at Assouan, a little below the town. I recommend any traveller who wishes for a new sensation in music to listen for it. What an effect such a song, delivered with the full lung power of a bronze-like Hercules of the shadoof, would make at a Monday Pop, especially if the singer wore his work-a-day costume, that is to say, nothing!

A more scientific musician was Aboo Roayha, whom we heard at Mustafa Aga's house at Luxor. I suppose he is the fiddler whose performance is so well described by Miss Edwards (Chap. 21). No Paganini could have had more complete mastery over his instrument, and we could but imagine what he might have done on a Stradivarius. Allowing for the difference of gamut, which makes all Arab music sound at first strange and discordant to English ears, nothing could be more moving than the strains which came from under his bow. He held his head on one side, his eyes half shut as he played, a smile of triumph on his lips, while his distended nostrils alone betrayed the emotions which his own playing awakened in his soul. He had an assistant or pupil, who sat behind him and kept time—Arab music, even in the wildest passages, allows for no "ad libitum"—while his chief went through all his wonderful repertory of shakes and trills, single string and double string performances, now breaking into

the most delicious melody, then into discords of startling horror, then into slow dances or marches, which made the hearer nod his head involuntarily, and then pulling up suddenly, as if without knowing it himself—all without any book or any guide but his own wonderful power of memory, or of impromptu composition.

One night, on our voyage down, we pitched our tent on the bank where the crews of a number of country boats were bivouacking, and I was much interested in listening to a different kind of entertainment. A story-teller, who went on into the small hours, was holding forth to his audience round a fire, close to where, within our canvas walls, my bed was set. The story broke off at short intervals with a kind of refrain. I could not understand much, but the whole point seemed to consist in always ending the paragraph or the passage with the same sentence. The effect was marvellous. Sometimes the sentence would come twice in succession after a short interval; then it would be delayed till you thought it would never come; but come it always did, and the more unexpectedly, the more the audience laughed. The story, so far as I could make out, was of the regular *Arabian Nights'* type,—there was a barber and a Caliph, and a man who remonstrated with his mother, and a moon-faced lady, and a little casket. The refrain had very much the effect which I have heard produced by a preacher who works his text in

different senses and aspects, into every paragraph of his sermon.

At this, my third visit to Thebes, I confess I took but little interest in the remains of the architecture of the nineteenth and twentieth dynasties. It is strange but true, that we do not know so much about the home life of the people of this perfectly historical period as we do about that of the infinitely remote and, so to speak, prehistoric, or at any rate, prechronological, time of the Ancient Monarchy. The calm blue or green gods, the king presenting his censer with the same shooter's gesture, the stiff formal drawing of features and limbs, the oppressive heaviness of the massive lintel and doorpost style, did not please me. "When you have seen one temple you have seen all," so people constantly say, and there is much truth in the saying.

On the other hand, there is much of interest in the historical narratives which sometimes occur, in the names of old kings, in the enumerations of the royal family, in the occasional poems, in the lists of conquered countries. I sought out the record of Shishak's campaign in Palestine, and copied the cartouche of Judah-Merek or Melek; I gazed long at the great Colossus—not Memnon, whose figure is a restoration, but the mighty monolith beside it; I climbed into an upper chamber at Medinet Aboo to see Rameses playing with his daughters; but to me, the blue sky, the clear air, the green fields, the yellow hills, the

shining Nile were more attractive than anything art has to show at Thebes.

There is nothing so wonderful in the buildings at Thebes, that a greater wonder does not exist among the far older remains near Memphis. There is nothing so beautiful among the sculptures in the kings' tombs or at Karnac, that is not far exceeded by the reliefs in the tomb of Thy at Sakkara. There is nothing so ancient and mysterious as the pyramid of Maydoom, and no goddess whom Thothmes or Seti worshipped can compare with the lovely Nefert.

Such are the grumblings of a disappointed and wearied sight-seer, yet it must not be supposed we had not a very pleasant visit to Luxor. One of the party would start off for a quiet hour among the *anteekas*, and would bargain over alabastar jars and tiny scarabs through a whole morning, now and then turning up a prize, and as often wasting his time. Or another would be missing and eventually traced into the stern gallery of the steamer, a spot pervaded by the presence of fair Americans. Or afternoon tea and curiosities at the door of our tents would bring pleasant visitors into the palm-grove.

One of the few nights we dined at home alone we were near coming "to utter and irreparable smash." While we were sitting at table, the door open for coolness, though the night was intensely dark, one of us saw what appeared to be two bull's

eyes turned on him from without. Immediately the tent shook, the tent-pole seemed to hop up and down on the ground, and the earth beneath us quaked as if a volcano was about to open in Said's palm-garden.

"Gamoos! gamoos!" shouted Hassan from the exterior, and immediately the mystery was solved. A buffalo had been attracted by the light to look in at our door. The sight of three men with knives in their hands, gnashing their teeth, was too much for his nerves, and forgetting the tent ropes he scampered off. He very nearly pulled the tent down on our heads, but when the guards had been well scolded, and the ropes tightened, we sat down afresh, provided with a subject sufficient for one night's laughter.

So passed a week and we began to prepare for our return. Hassan knew a man who had a boat, and one day when we went across to the other side we happened to praise the vessel which took us over. This was the very boat which we were offered—but whether because we had praised it, or because it was the very thing we wanted, or for some other reason equally good, the friend of Hassan put such a price on it that we refused even to make him an offer. Meanwhile the conditions were altered by the secession of the Scot. He had come with us—indeed he had come to Egypt—to visit a friend who was among the invalids now staying at the hotel; and poor A., when it came to arranging

for our departure, seemed to cling to him, and to be anxious he should stay a little longer.

A. was a well known literary man, and the friend of us all three, but especially of our Scot, who had known him intimately for many years. Here at Luxor A. had hoped to get rid of an aguish fever which had hung about him for many months and had greatly added to the weakness induced already by delicate lungs. But those of us who had seen him but a short time before at the Hotel du Nil, in Cairo, were shocked at his appearance and the evident increase of his illness, and when the Scot announced his intention of remaining with him, we could not believe it would be for long, The end was evidently approaching with rapidity, but we had no idea it would come so soon.

Meanwhile, a smaller boat was found. The *reis* was an honest-looking man, and his boat was beautifully clean. It was certainly small—just thirty feet from rudder to bow—and had only a kind of little half-deck at the stern, and another forward for the rowers. In the centre, I should say amidships, it was undecked. In this part we installed our *cuisine;* on the half-deck aft we fitted a low awning like a gipsy tent, and placed our table in front of the half-deck, so that we could sit at it, and keep the covered space in which we spread our rugs for a divan.

At last, on the 1st February, our tents were struck, packed, and carried down to the boat, with the beds

and our luggage, except that of the Scot, which was sent to the hotel. The evening before, we had bidden poor A. farewell, little thinking we should ever see him again. He talked happily enough of an expedition to Beyroot in the summer, and, concealing our misgivings, we encouraged the idea, and helped to make plans we never hoped to carry out. The three travellers dined together for the last time, and endeavoured to be as cheerful as they could under the circumstances; but they were not destined to part after all.

In the morning, after everything had been sent on board, we returned to the hotel, partly to inquire for poor A., partly to bring the Scot down to the shore to see us off. As we were still lingering in the porch, A.'s servant came down with a pale face. His master was breathing very hard, he said, and did not seem to recognise him. We ascended to his chamber, and summoned the doctor in haste. But there was nothing to be done. The rays of the morning sun entered the open window, but the darkness of death had already shadowed our friend's face.

We had little time to give way to sorrow. In that southern land burial follows death within a few hours, and before many of the sojourners in the hotel knew he was gone, they were summoned to attend his funeral.

In the midst of the sunshine, under the trees of the garden, two carpenters worked all morning at a huge

box, and the gay tourists who came and went did not know that they were making a coffin. A. had died at a quarter before nine. By half-past three all was prepared, and we wrapped him in his plaid and laid him reverently to rest. The landlady covered the coffin with a white sheet on which wreaths of lovely flowers had been arranged, and four stout Arabs took up the light burden, followed by his three friends and many of those who, but the day before, had conversed with him as he reclined in his chair on the shady side of the terrace.

The Coptic church at Luxor is a quaint building entered from a narrow lane by a court, over the door of which is a wooden cross. It has five aisles, supported by pillars, and the apse is shut off by a beautiful screen of carved woodwork, over which hang an old "gold-ground" picture of two saints, and a modern German lithograph of the Holy Family. The body was borne into the sanctuary; and while a kind clergyman from the hotel read the solemn English service, the Coptic priest and his assistants swung the censer round the coffin, and stuck long candles at the four corners. The scene was strange but very impressive, and tears were not wanting among those who stood amid the shadows of the dimly-lighted church.

We next took our sad way through the outskirts of the town to the summit of a little knoll on the road towards Karnac, whose colossal pylons and lofty

pillars were visible through the groves of palms. Here is a little enclosure in which rest the bones of those few English people who have died at Luxor. In one corner was a vacant space, and here the grave was dug, and when the last words had been said and the last blessing pronounced, we left the body of our friend departed in charge of the priests and officers of the old Jacobite church.

The sun began to set as the last rites were finished, and we returned sadly to the town. We made our acknowledgments to the Coptic community at the house of a native gentleman, and were gratified by the sympathetic kindness with which the old priest received our thanks. There was much to be done and many letters to be written, and I was not sorry when one of the most melancholy days I had ever spent had come to an end.

THE REIS.

TENT LIFE AT LUXOR.

CHAPTER XX.

FLOATING DOWN.

The Voyage to Sioot—The Famine District Again—Belianeh—A Hospitable Sheykh—A Concert—Sioot.

THE Scot prepared to accompany his friends in their little boat, and before day had dawned we were ready to start, and saw our last sight of the Theban mountains, the Colossus, the Temples, and the lonely hillock on the road to Karnac, by the time the sun had fairly risen.

Of our voyage, which lasted eight days, there might be much to tell, but the daily routine wanted all elements of adventure. We slept that night at Bellaseh, where the *goolas*, so universally used in Egypt, are chiefly made. Here, as one of us remarked, "we lay among the pots," our tent being

pitched on the bank beside the heaps of jars, close to the river, in a grove of magnificent palms. The great jars of porous earthenware which were around us are known all over Egypt as ballases. Query, has our word *ballast* any connection with *ballas?* A ballas is so called even in Alexandria. The bank here was crowded with boats loading, and great stacks of earthen jars. The moon, which had denied us her countenance in our ride, was now in wonderful beauty and radiance, and before turning in we had a walk among the corn-fields and the palms, and so made up for a day chiefly spent, except for an hour in the market-place at Goos, in lying under the awning and talking of our friend who was gone. It seemed so strange—alive, intelligent as usual, full of interest in our journey, questioning us as to what we had seen, listening to our historical speculations, criticising our views, forming plans for the summer, and within twenty-four hours dead and buried! Some one remembered and applied Mrs. Browning's lines—

> "Just so young but yesternight,
> Now *he* is as old as death.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> *He* has seen the mystery hid
> Under Egypt's pyramid:
> By those eyelids pale and close,
> Now *he* knows what Rhamses knows."

By degrees, as the pink peaks of the Thebaid faded from our view in the sunshine, and as turn after turn of the river brought us once more to the table-

topped cliffs of Lower Egypt, the melancholy yielded, and our minds recovered from the shock. But the gloom cast over our recollections of Luxor will be permanent.

We were already back in the famine district, or, rather, it had crept further up the river. A little later the relief, sent more than two months too late by the government of Mr. Wilson, opened funds at various places, including Luxor, and a short notice of what was done there will be found among the letters I have collected in the Appendix.[1]

I have also placed there the descriptions of several eye-witnesses, all of whom are known to me, and for fairness' sake, the two very uncourteous replies,—the only attempts at reply, indeed, which were made,—by Mr. Wilson and Hamam Effendi.

It is hardly worth while now to show the fallacy of either of these replies, as our reports are more than justified by Professor Robertson Smith, by the *Times'* own correspondent, and by the "trustworthy informant." But it may be well to observe that Hammam Effendi does not mention the source from which we derived our information: so that his letter is beside the mark, and I can only suppose it refers to events which took place after our visit. There is, of course, an alternative interpretation.

Mr. Wilson's letter betrays a curious ignorance of the state of the country he was supposed to govern.

[1] See p. 378.

But I will only notice here one sentence of it :—"*Two months ago* the government despatched two Englishmen with *carte blanche*," &c.

Unfortunately for this statement I can refer to an article written in the best-known London weekly paper in March, 1878, that is to say, *twelve* months before the date of Mr. Wilson's letter. In the course of that article mention is made of the belief prevalent among all travellers in Upper Egypt during the winter of 1877—78, that an extraordinary Nile must result in a famine. It seems that what was visible to any inquiring tourist was invisible to the government of Mr. Wilson. Relief sent in the end of January was at least three months too late.

But there is no use in going back through a long series of mistakes and crimes to find first causes. The first cause of the famine is the excessive taxation : and though the famine itself was foreseen a year before, no effort was made by the government to anticipate the effects of a scarcity by any form of relief. The effort made by Mr. Wilson in January, 1879, to send money, was no doubt praiseworthy, and if he had not by his letter to the *Times* endeavoured to make out that it was sufficiently early, I should have nothing but praise to bestow on it. Unfortunately, it is only on that account another example of the failure he everywhere evinced to see the true position of affairs in Egypt.

It was at Belianeh on the 5th February that we

saw the most miserable assembly of starving people. Their aspect is fully described in some of the letters I print in the Appendix (see p. 371), and I will now but too willingly quit a most disagreeable part of my subject, and briefly detail a few impressions of what, but for these distressing sights, would have been a most delightful voyage.

Though every day of our ride from Sioot to Luxor is clearly impressed on my memory, I have but an indistinct recollection of the events of the return voyage. I remember long days of sunshine on the river, days when we glided along with the stream under tall cliffs of white limestone, marked here and there with the square-headed doorways of ancient tombs; or, while the crew sang their quaint love-songs, swept past the high brown banks, watching the patient labours of the shadoof, under the mounds of old towns where low mud hovels clustered round white minarets, and where blue-robed women in long procession came to draw water in their tall earthen jars. I remember evenings when we saw the moon rise over the eastern mountains, gleaming from behind some distant peak as if a volcano had broken out, and gradually developing into a glorious disk, shining with a radiance unknown except in the clear dry air of Egypt. I remember mornings when we watched the moon set behind the western palm-groves while the sun rose above the cliffs of the opposite shore and dispelled the white

mist which had hung about the dawn. We lay under our awning and read: we studied the history and the hieroglyphs of old Kam, or tried our scanty Arabic in conversations with the sailors, or wrote letters announcing our speedy return to Cairo. Sometimes at a bend of the river we landed and walked across to rejoin the boat through fields already whitening to the first harvest of the year, and lost our way among intersecting canals, or drank coffee on the benches of rural villages, or ferreted out goldsmiths and dyers among the Coptic quarters of larger towns. Strange *anteekas* were brought to us,—broken European candlesticks, very rare and fine, according to the owners—a silver pencil-case in one place, a yard measure in another. Sometimes a great steamer would pass, puffing and rattling, sometimes a dahabeyah in full sail before the wind, sometimes a fleet of country boats on their way to market.

We pitched successively at Geseeret e' Shendoweel, where we were alarmed in the night by the fall of a portion of the bank close to the tent; at Michaela, whose name preserves the memory of the archangel of the Christians; and one night in a little village on the eastern bank whose name I cannot recall, but it seemed by its length out of all proportion to a minute assemblage of about a dozen houses. Here, as it was blowing hard, we availed ourselves of the hospitality of the sheykh, placing the tent in his court-yard for shelter: and returned his

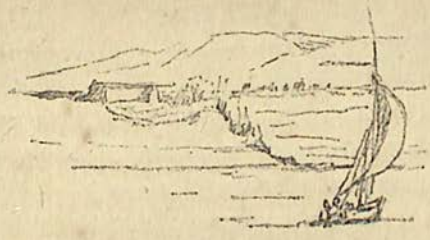
courtesy by a grand instrumental concert on the musical box. I well remember the looks of awe with which the brown faces beamed as one after another each man present was allowed to hold it to his ear for a moment, and the interminable hand-shakings which marked the conclusion of the performance.

On the morning of the 8th February Sioot was in sight, and before mid-day our voyage was over. We felt quite at home in the old town, and had a hearty welcome from our donkey boys who had made their return journey in safety in five days. They must have hurried the unloaded donkeys home at a tremendous pace, but with the moon to light them they were probably able in the night to make forced marches, impossible for us. We sent our tents and baggage to the railway station and roamed about the bazaars till bed-time. The Scot adventured his body

in the public bath, but the Antiquary contented himself with a survey of the curious old dome supported on great granite pillars which may once have formed the chief ornaments of a temple of Hapi, the wolf-headed guardian of highways and the local divinity of the ancient Sioot.

There was little sleep to be had in the well-peopled beds of the Greek lodging-house: and we rose with the dawn for a last packing up, before we betook ourselves to the platform and commenced our last day's journey.

ATHOR AT SILSILIS.



APPENDIX

OF

LETTERS RELATING TO THE FAMINE IN UPPER EGYPT.

THE first letter was written on our return, and appeared on the 13th March. It was pointedly referred to and confirmed by two members of Parliament in the House of Commons the following evening :—

To the Editor of the Times.

"SIR,—Having just returned from an excursion through the Said from Siout to Luxor, I venture to ask your leave to call the attention of your readers to the awful state of distress in which we found the people. I cannot help thinking that since it is by the encouragement that lenders in England have given to the Khedive to spend the bread-money of his unhappy people on distant wars and private extravagance, it will be but fair that they should have an opportunity, if they desire it, of doing something to alleviate the misery they have not very indirectly caused. We rode on donkeys 200 miles through the more remote districts. Everywhere the most heartrending state of poverty was revealed. Taxation having taken from the Arab every reserve he may have

saved in years of comparative prosperity, the failure of the dourra crop, through the excessive inundation of this year, deprived him of any possible means of subsistence. Near the sugar factories the famine was proportionately greater, as the drain upon the resources of the people is, of course, heavier where a large area of land has been seized for a crop which returns nothing to the actual cultivator, and where forced labour in the fields and factory deprives the peasant of his most valuable time. It was sad, in the midst of so much want, to see men driven with whips to labour for the English bondholder, while the fields were lying untilled, and the repeated asseverations of the French superintendent that "every man was paid once a month in silver" only showed by his vehement emphasis that such payment was a new and remarkable feature. In the town of How we saw men actually die in the street; but the skeleton children were the most shocking sight. When children are reduced to skin and bone, the famine must indeed be sore in the land. In one place we saw a boy gnawing the husks of sugar-cane left in the fields. At every village the cry of the mourners was heard as we passed. No pen can describe the condition of the crowd which used every day to assemble as we took our luncheon on the roadside. Our very crumbs and the oil of our sardines were greedily seized. At Dendera we reached the river's bank and crossed to Keneh. We were much impressed at the sight of a passing steamer belonging to the Khedive, which looked to our eyes glaringly and ostentatiously magnificent after the scenes we had witnessed among his Highness's subjects. We were told that two Englishmen were on board. 'No doubt,' we remarked, 'they will survey the country through an opera-glass and return thinking they know all about it.' At Keneh we found the worst of the distress was over; but a

few weeks before a kind-hearted native gentleman whose name I dare not mention, fed as many as 7,000 starving persons for some days. We heard in several places of similar acts of charity; and, but that I am afraid of involving any of my informants in unpleasantness with the authorities, I could give chapter and verse for many particulars of the famine to which I can only allude. At one place the Cook's tourists fed 1,000 people with bread. The first news we heard when we reached Luxor was that the Viceroy had given a magnificent entertainment to the Europeans at Cairo. It is of course but right that money should be spent in Cairo, but the account of these festivities jarred unpleasantly on our feelings after the scenes we had witnessed during the past eight days. We next heard that the Khedive had sent two Englishmen to investigate the reports of the distress, and a few days later came the news that they had reported 'the accounts of the distress in Upper Egypt are greatly exaggerated.'

"I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

"W. J. L.

"CAIRO, EGYPT, *February* 27.

"P.S. I have just heard, on unquestionable authority, that the two Englishmen sent to report on the famine were on board the steamer which passed us at Dendera."

I must refer to p. 378, for some remarks explanatory of the reference in this postscript.

On the 26th March the following letter was published. It was headed "From a Correspondent." I have reason to know that the writer accompanied Professor Robertson Smith, whose account therefore repeats his in one or two places, for the letters were written without collusion:—

"ERMENT, *February* 24.

"'Inshallah, in another twenty days, we shall have the bean crop ready for the knife.' This is the answer always given now when inquiries are made after the late distress, of which, now that the worst is past, the fellahs do not seem anxious to furnish details. They have patiently borne want, then hunger, and lastly starvation, and now that the end seems near, they are willing to forget it all. But such a time as the last three months for the fellahs must leave traces, and famine cannot pass trackless. From Assiout upwards to Luxor the sufferings of the natives must have been and still are in one or two of the less-visited villages, appalling. Even in the large and comparatively flourishing town of Assiout, some of the sights in the streets and by the river bank were most distressing. Passing in the morning we saw a wretched old woman and two children lying on the river bank. The children were skin and bone, and the woman scarcely distinguishable as a human being. We gave her bread, but she seemed unable to eat it, and after a few sighs and moans fell back into her semi-comatose state. She could hardly have lived through the night, and there were several like her. At the same place we noticed a handsome girl of sixteen or so standing on the bank. On asking her what she wanted, she replied, 'bread,' and ate greedily a piece of the coarse bran bread of the country. Her gratitude knew no bounds when presented with a few piastres, and she unfolded her small history—how she had walked from her native village, where her family were all dead, in hopes of finding relief at Assiout, but had found none, and was still another unit added to the crowd of hunger-stricken Arabs flocking in daily. Poor Werda (Rose)! She was, however, only one of thousands, and this in a town in immediate connection with

Cairo by rail, and easy reach of any assistance should it be proffered. The American missionaries are active here as elsewhere, but they are only able to give help to comparatively few—seven loaves among 5,000 ! But if the distress is bad at Assiout, what can it be called higher up—at Haŏu, at Bagour, and such smaller villages on the left bank. Many of the people there are past help, and sit naked, like wild beasts, eating roots—the khelba that grows among the clover, the clover-leaves themselves, and the wild sorrel; while some solace the pangs of hunger with the refuse sugar-cane after distillation. A lucky few, perhaps, steal and furtively boil a bean or two, but such a feast is exceptional. The look on the faces of these poor creatures is almost superhumanly ghastly. Suffering, endurance, despair, and madness, worked on by famine, stamp such a brand on the starving fellahs as cannot be easily described. If their faces are hidden, as they generally are, from the intense heat and the tormenting flies, the shrunken limbs and staring bones tell their tale plainly enough.' There are full-grown men whose legs are scarcely thicker than a dog's, and whose arms are like chicken-bones. To see such a man lying in the sun with the flies swarming on him as if he were already dead, and the wasted hand without strength to drive them from his eyes and lips, is sickening. And this distress has come on them without possibility of their guarding against it, through last year's inundations. To understand this it must be first known that the fellah lives from hand to mouth, from day to day, and never has any store against a rainy day. He has no ambition to acquire wealth, for it would be so highly taxed as to be worth less than the 'middle estate,' giving him much more trouble and less returns.

"There is a Turkish saying very prevalent and very much

followed: 'I have but a little pottage, but a head without care;' and however small his possession, the fellah prefers to enjoy it in peace rather than to acquire more and involve himself at once in difficulties with his neighbours and the tax-collector. The crushing taxes laid on the fellahs are, of course, one great and primary cause of their universal poverty. Scarcely a possession that does not come under governmental tax. Firstly, there is the *gharagh*, or land-tax, which is a never-ending cause of dispute. The assessment now is 150 piastres per acre; but every farthing over and above the 40 piastres paid in the time of Mehemet Ali is considered a grievance and an extortion. Secondly, the *wurgeh*, or occupation-tax, to which every man is liable. The assessment lies chiefly with the Sheikh-el-Beled, or head of the village, and is very nearly arbitrary, so that a good deal of injustice naturally goes on. For instance, the sheikh will require a sum of 2*l.* to make up his accounts, and he has to deal with A, B, and C. A is wealthy and ought to pay 1*l.* 15*s.*, while B and C pay 2*s.* 6*d.* each; but A, being a personal friend of the sheikh's, gets off with 10*s.*, and B, having presented the sheikh with some figs or other trifling present, pays 10*s.* more, while unfortunate C has to pay 1*l.* Every male above the age of twelve is liable to this tax, and taking a strong and well-to-do man and a little boy at random, we found the man paid 13f. and the little fellow 10f. per annum.

"In addition to these, every man has to buy his *tezkereh*, or paper giving him his rights as a citizen, at a price of 31 piastres. Women and children pay no taxes except the salt-tax, which, however, is ridiculously heavy, as every man has to buy 10 piastres' worth for every member of his family. Besides this there are the extra taxes on cloth, cattle, boats, palm-trees, &c. All stuffs of inland

manufacture are stamped and paid for as if at the Customs. Cattle are rated at various sums, according to their value. Boats are taxed at so much an *ardebb*, equivalent to taxation by tonnage, and this applies to every description of craft. For the palm-trees about *2s. 6d.* is paid for each small palm, and twice as much for a large one. When we consider that very often in a bad year the palms bear nothing, this tax seems extremely high. Doubtless it is a very profitable one for the Egyptian Government, but it is a very oppressive one for the villages whose palm-groves present such a pleasant border to the Nile.

"Forced labour is ostensibly abolished, but it doubtless goes on still near the sugar factories, where the natives have no chance of protecting themselves. The raids on villages and the wholesale requisitions have been put an end to, but secret pressing is undeniably going on. The same story came from all we asked. They are all in expectation of Rivers Wilson's scheme being put in force; but if asked if it was not in operation, the reply would be, 'Not just yet; a little longer.' How much longer? is the question. It is a notable fact that, of the many villages we have seen lately, those containing sugar manufactories seemed always to be in very bad, if not in the worst, condition. At Bagour, for instance, there was but one decent house, guarded by a strong post of soldiers belonging to the Mufettish. The only other building worthy the name was the factory itself. The streets were full of naked and wretchedly-dressed people. The old and the very young were for the most part like walking skeletons. A little inland the people were timid, and ran away at the approach of the Frank, evidently being afraid of ill-treatment of some kind. A great many Nubians seemed to be employed in the trade, and the bank showed activity, being lined with sugar-boats, but the

workers were despondent-looking and half-starved. One old fellow had a moment's respite, and appealed to us for '*backsheesh*,' with a look of misery difficult to forget. The same was the case at Erment, where there is a very large factory. The distress is not nearly so great, and never has been, as lower down; but there is the same degraded and bullied look about the population which cannot fail to strike one at the first glance.

"We found the population very busy here and there in raising *jisrs*, or dams. This is forced work also, but is legal, contributing, as it does, to the public good. Still it is an opportunity for infinite embezzling and peculation, as the requisition is sent simply to the sheikh and he is left to himself to furnish the men. Let us suppose a sheikh receives a requisition for forty men. He proclaims that he has need of fifty men, and posts up his order, which no one can read. He proceeds to choose fifty wealthy men, who at once propose to get substitutes. He pockets the clear surplus of the fictitious ten, and a handsome gratuity from each of the forty, who pay both him and the substitutes. This is the system on which most of the villages are governed, and it will at once be seen how impossible it is for any of them to flourish. Where there is no freedom and no reward for business activity, there is no stimulus nor inducement for any man to produce more than is actually necessary for his daily wants. Thus it has happened that the failure of the first wheat crop—or *dourah shitawi*—has plunged the whole of Lower Egypt into a state of terrible famine and distress, accompanied with sufferings which will never be known. Now the wretched fellahs are in hopes of their bean crops, which also have been retarded through the waters lying so long over the face of the land. Once started with that, let us hope that they will learn a lesson,

and their masters too. In addition to the failure of the *dourah shitawi*, there has been partial destruction of the *barseem*, a clover in which there is grub this year. After the beans comes the second wheat crop, or *dourah saïfi*, and this has to be reaped, and the ground prepared and sown ready for the autumnal inundations. There is, consequently, a season of great activity now opening before the Nile population; the only question is whether there is enough energy left, or even the small amount of capital necessary, to enable them to take advantage of the growing harvest which promises so well. So long have they been oppressed and ground down, that it is very difficult for them to recover quickly from their late misfortunes. As long as the administration of the villages is left so much to the sheikh as it is at present, and as long as that worthy has the same happy opportunities of peculation, it is hard to see any definite end to the evils which follow. If all the taxes except the *gharagh* were removed from the small villages, and only applied, in a more modified form even then, to the larger country towns, there might be some hope for the fellah. At present his life is one hard and protracted struggle for his bread, with no encouragement and no future before him. Even in a little village, consisting, perhaps, of ten hovels, where the name of England surprised us on Arab lips, they asked if 'the Sultan had given the government of Egypt over to the English, and if so, who was the English *wakeel*, or deputy.' This speaks for itself.

"On returning we stopped at Belyaneh, where the people are lying in the market-place and starving slowly without the slightest attempt to help them. The children and the women are the worst off, and they fought over scraps of bread like wild animals. The stronger always took from the weak, and it was impossible to help them much. The

inhabitants said that more than 1,000 had already died there. The misery in the streets passes description. Half the people were like walking skeletons—when they could summon strength to walk. At Girgeh we found very much the same—very nearly as bad as at Belyaneh. The people seem to have no one to look to. No commissioners and few Europeans have visited any of the larger towns by the river even. No one ever thinks of the inland hamlets, where the villagers are starving like dogs.

"At Edfoo we found an old woman who had been lying two days and nights half in and half out of the water, with not a soul to help her. She could not even swallow soup without friction applied to the outside of her throat, and when slightly recovered, moist bread had to be forced down her throat in the same way."

Professor Robertson Smith had access, from his exceptional knowledge of Arabic, to sources of information denied to most tourists. His letter appeared in the *Times* on the 31st March:—

"SIR,—So far as I can gather from the papers which reach me here, the English public is still imperfectly acquainted with the gravity of the famine which has afflicted Upper Egypt during the past winter. Nor is this surprising, for even in Cairo one hears most contradictory accounts of the state of things from those who ought to have access to the best sources of information.

"Let me, therefore, send you some account of what I have seen with my own eyes, and gathered from conversation with the people during a journey from Assiût to Edfû and back, which extended from the 10th of February to the 12th of March. As I travelled mainly to study the vernacular and observe the habits of the people, I visited a

great many villages, and lost no opportunity of conversing with the peasantry.

"In 1877 there was "no Nile" above Assiût, and the wheat and bean crops of the following spring were a total failure. There remained the crop of *dura* planted on the higher land, which ought to have been ripe at the beginning of last winter. But this crop was in great measure destroyed by the excessive inundation of 1878. These successive strokes were the proximate cause of the famine. But there has been no real scarcity of food in Egypt. Wheat is cheaper than it was last year, and my sailors purchased excellent grain at Esneh at the rate of a napoleon and a half for the *ardebb* of five bushels. An occasional failure of the Nile must always be counted upon in Egypt, and where the peasantry are so frugal and industrious the surplus of good years ought to be sufficient to meet the deficiencies of a bad season. The existence of a widespread famine, with numerous deaths from hunger when food was not at an unreasonable price, can only be ascribed to the fact that when the bad year came the stores of the peasantry were already exhausted by oppressive taxation. That at least is the explanation which I have invariably received, not only from the peasants themselves, but from European residents in Upper Egypt, who have been familiar with the state of the people for years. I attach special value to the testimony of Dr. Hogg, of the American Mission at Assiût, who knows the natives thoroughly, and by whom I was assured that the people are so exhausted by over-taxation, that, even in ordinary years, many persons towards the close of the winter are reduced to live on roots and herbs gathered from the fields. To a population already so near the verge of starvation, the loss of a year's crop was fatal, and the suffering has been extreme through the whole

conntry south of Assiût, but especially, so far as I can observe, in the district above Girgeh.

"In describing the aspect which the country presents to a traveller, I must distinguish between the towns and the small villages.

"When food began to fail in the country districts there was a great rush of starving people to the towns in quest of charity. The town of Assiût was the chief centre towards which they collected, and here an attempt was made to relieve their necessities by an organised distribution of bread from a public *makhbaz*. But, in spite of this, the streets, as I passed up the river, were full of poor wretches crawling about in the last stage of emaciation or unable to rise from the ground. A month later a great change was visible. Many, no doubt, had died, and the survivors had scattered through the fields to gather green beans, now sufficiently near maturity to support existence. In other towns the same sight was repeated on a smaller scale. One did not see so many persons stretched in public places in the last stage of hunger, but in every market-place there were children and old people cowering in corners and chewing herbs or straw, whose pallor and extreme emaciation showed how real was their distress. In places little visited by European travellers they often did not even ask for alms. In fact, the magnitude of the calamity and the great rush of sufferers to the towns seem to have paralysed the private charity for which the Egyptians have generally a good report. 'If a man gave an *ashara* (a halfpenny) one day,' I was told, 'he had a hundred applicants next morning.' My own experience showed me that it was in truth almost impossible to give alms in the street. At Belianeh, amid a great crowd of the ordinary professional beggars who congregate wherever tourists stop, and to whom I, of course, paid no

attention, I was called by the bystanders to help a poor creature lying 'utterly broken' beneath a wall. Then quite a crowd of real sufferers came up, chiefly children, some in a state of ravenous hunger, others scarcely able to eat the bread which, gathering them in a circle, I began to distribute. The sight of bread roused them almost to frenzy, and every cake was torn into morsels by contending hands. Each moment the crowd thickened, till I had 200 or 300 people, of whom probably two-thirds were mere professional beggars, jostling me, treading on one another, and tearing the bread from weaker hands. I was at length compelled to retire to my boat, seeing it to be hopeless to do anything without the aid of the police. I apprehend that in cases of serious famine the rush to towns must in this way paralyse the ordinary Oriental system of almsgiving. Effective help must be organised, and, except where there are Europeans to direct, the management can hardly be organised except by the Government. But what has the Government done? The failure of last year's crops was known to be inevitable in the autumn of 1877. The exhausted state of the peasantry was known to all who took an interest in the people and can hardly have been unknown to the authorities. Yet not a single step was taken to meet a calamity the approach of which was mathematically certain months before it fell. But, worse than this. In Assiût a public collection was made when the famine first approached, and a sum of (I think) 300*l.* was handed over to be administered by the Government officials. Of this money nothing more has been heard, and a few weeks ago the people in power at Cairo were unaware that it had ever been collected.

"Let me now turn to the country districts. In these there was much less visible distress. The flight of so many to the towns made it easier for private charity to operate, and the

villagers are always helpful to one another. But everywhere I heard the same story. A large number of the poor had been living through the winter on roots and green fodder (*hashhîs*), wild mustard, fenugrek, coarse lettuce, and the like. Those who were strong enough to wander through the fields and steal had survived, and as the spring crops approached ripeness, and afforded more nourishing food, the worst of their distress was past. The weak and the sick had died. Those who know the East will understand that it was impossible in a passing visit to collect any statistics as to the number of deaths. In some villages, though many were said to be 'hungering' and to have no bread, it was not admitted that any had died of famine. These better accounts were chiefly from the northern villages, or in places where some *dura* had been saved; but in most districts it is certain that the deaths had been very numerous, and, though the people's spirits were rising fast with the approach of the harvest, I fear that in the worst places many more must still die. This year's harvest promises very well, except that in some places the later wheat and the lentils have suffered from the grub, while many fields have been nearly bared by the starving people, who tore up the green crops for food.

"In conclusion, let me say a word as to the temper of the people under the calamity. The blame was universally laid on the Government, or rather on Ismail Pasha. It was impossible, I was told, for the people to live under the present exactions, and this, I believe, is strictly true.

"I generally went to the villages quite alone, finding that in this case the people were ready to speak freely when their first shyness was over. I was surprised to find how openly and strongly they expressed themselves about the Viceroy. This was, no doubt, partly due to the fact that they had

heard some vague rumours of a change in the Government. They generally knew the name of Nubar Pasha, and had some notion that the Government was now in the hands of an Englishman who was often identified with Nubar. They were anxious to know whether Ismail Pasha was still in power or had been removed by the Sultan. The idea that the dynasty of Mohammed Ali has any legitimate and inalienable claim to the throne of Egypt may prevail in Europe, but has no place in the minds of his subjects. To the peasantry the Viceroy is merely the Pasha, answerable for his tyranny to the Chief of the Faithful and his ally, the Queen of England. To the English the people are very favourably disposed. They became more friendly when I told them that I was English, and their hope rests at present on English help. Of course the main thing they look for is a reduction of taxation to a just footing. I am persuaded that this is the first step in any real reform. But it will not be easy to do justice so as to satisfy the peasants, who, with the usual conservatism of the East, invariably referred to the standard of taxation under Mohammed Ali—40 piastres the faddan—as 'the fundamental right' (*el hakkelasli*) which ought to be restored. The present tax is on the average from three to five times that amount—a burden which the people cannot bear in addition to all their other payments, but which in view of the great rise in the value of agricultural produce can never be reduced to what the peasantry think right.

"One thing, however, must be kept in view if anything is to be effected that can help the country. Neither the interests of the ruling dynasty nor the claims of creditors can be allowed to interfere with the right of the people to live by their labour. A system under which so hardy and frugal a population are reduced by a single bad year to the state which I have described cannot be allowed to endure.

If the Viceroy stands in the way of radical reform, he must be put aside; no one except his creatures will regret his fall. The question of the debt is more serious, but the country can never prosper and develop its natural resources till the peasantry are relieved; so that even selfish motives should prescribe patience to the creditors of Egypt. And it is certain that the present moment is Europe's opportunity. If we can prove that our interference is on behalf of justice and humanity, we shall acquire an influence with the people that cannot be over-estimated. But if it appears that we have no higher motive than to secure our own pecuniary interests, leaving the people to languish in misery, we shall earn the hatred that springs from bitter disappointment, and need not expect for many years to have any influence in Egypt beyond what is due to our material force. There will be a strong reaction against all European ideas, and the explosion which must come some day, unless the present misery is relieved, will probably be turned against the European residents in the country, with consequences which one shudders to think of.

"Yours, &c.,

"W. ROBERTSON SMITH.

"CAIRO, *March* 15."

The following letter was sent through the *Times* correspondent, by an Oxford Fellow and Tutor, who has travelled in Egypt annually for many years, and who is well acquainted with colloquial Arabic: it appeared on the 8th April, having been written at Cairo on the 29th March:—

"The Commissioners sent by the Egyptian Government for the relief of the famine in Upper Egypt (Mr. Baird and Captain Harrison) have now returned to

Cairo, and a full report of their proceedings may shortly be expected. In the meantime a few particulars from an eye-witness may be interesting. On this side of Luxor, which was the limit of my journey, the district which has suffered most is that between Soohag and Keneh, a distance of some seventy miles. When I went up the river about five weeks ago the relief had been already organised at eight places in that district; but a fortnight's feeding had been insufficient to do much towards ameliorating the appearance of the people. To any one accustomed to the Nile, the evidences of deep distress were most manifest. The traveller in Egypt soon gets accustomed to poverty, rags, and nakedness; but the bodies of the natives are generally well nourished and apparently healthy. This year one saw emaciation, scurvy, and dysentery. The relief had evidently come three months too late. The people, deprived of their ordinary food, have striven to support themselves by eating green weeds, the refuse of sugar-cane, and any garbage on which they could lay their hands. One of the Commissioners told me that he saw a boy picking like a sparrow the grains from among the dung of animals. Many escaped actual starvation only to die of the diseases which starvation engendered. On my return journey the steady distribution of wholesome bread was evidently beginning to tell on all but the most hopeless cases. The great majority, though still lean, were beginning to struggle back towards a healthy condition. The system adopted by the Commissioners may be illustrated by what I saw at Luxor. In a large court-yard, flanked by part of the ancient temple, were assembled some 350 persons, men, women, and children, all, of course, ragged and dirty. Six only of these were natives of the place. The distressed naturally flock from the villages to the centres

of relief. A committee, consisting of the native consular agents, assisted the Ma-oon, or police-officer, in the distribution. The bread was brought each day from the bake-house and weighed out in presence of the committee. Each person received as his daily ration three small loaves, about 2 lb. altogether. It was decided that it was of no use to administer relief in money or even in grain. It would have been embezzled by the officials and never have found its way to the mouths of the poor. Baked bread was not so well worth stealing. For the same reason the Commissioners did not send relief to the villages, but confined it to centres where there was a sufficient number of respectable inhabitants to form a committee and exercise supervision.

"The system appeared to me to work well enough in the case of the men, but many of the children were evidently not in a state to be revived by a merely bread diet. At Luxor the Commissioners tried the experiment of allowing milk for the worst cases, and they deputed the resident English physician and myself to see to the distribution. We collected all the children and gave tickets to twenty-two who seemed in urgent need of better nourishment. The milk was bought each day by the Ma-oon, who ladled it out twice a day in the presence of one or other of us. The daily ration was a measure containing about four-fifths of a pint. As the people gradually dispersed to their homes the number of children fell at the end of ten days to about fourteen. With two exceptions all were visibly reviving under this diet. The doctor remained at Luxor four days after I left. With his departure the distribution of milk ceased. It is melancholy to think that no milk could be given at other places where the need was more pressing. Even as I came down the river, in spite of the general improvement, there were children at Belianeh and Girgeh

to whom to offer dry bread was a mere mockery. Perhaps it would have been better to risk something in the attempt to save them; but after consulting the highest native officials of the province, the Commissioners came to the conclusion, and I dare not say they were wrong, that to order milk where there was no European to see it actually administered would have been simply to put money in the pocket of the Sheikh-el-Beled. As far as bread is concerned, all the evidence I was able to collect went to show that no one willing to come to the distribution was refused. No doubt there was much distress among the class just above the paupers, who bore it as best they could in their own villages; but no machinery was available by which this class could be reached. The plentiful harvest now at hand will be their best relief, if it is not wrung from them by the tax-collectors.

"After witnessing the exertions of the Commissioners in Upper Egypt, and listening to their accounts of what they had seen, I returned to Cairo to hear that a notice had been published in the English papers that the Commissioners had telegraphed that 'the accounts of the distress were greatly exaggerated.' No honest man with eyes in his head could have sent such a report, and it is needless to say that the Commissioners are entirely guiltless of it, as their report will amply prove.

"Every one who knows the country knows that the famine was directly due to over-taxation, which exhausted all the stock in the country, and left the people without resources to meet the accident of a bad Nile. The same will be the case again whenever the next irregularity in the inundation occurs. There can be no remedy so long as Egypt is administered in the interest, not of its people, but of the Khedive or of his creditors. Other Oriental rulers

have ruined and impoverished their subjects for the moment. It is reserved for this generation to permit a single despot to entail permanent burdens on a country which has never benefited by his loans. Soldiers, palaces, women, eunuchs, horses, and diamonds are all there is to show for the money borrowed. Most of it appears to have been frittered away in true prodigal fashion in the payment of back interest, discounts, and commissions. It ought to be brought home to English creditors of the Khedive that their exorbitant though precarious usury is only exacted at the cost of the misery of a whole population. England has a right to know what she is doing. One can scarcely blame the Khedive for 'doing after his kind' and squandering every farthing on which he could lay his hands. Were we to expect a miracle—that a Turk should look five years ahead; that he should deny himself a toy because somebody else might starve for it? But to saddle the fellaheen with his debts and even to intervene to compel them to pay (as we did last May, in spite of the remonstrances of our Consul-General), this is surely unworthy of civilised and honourable nations. The fellah has two enemies—the Khedive and the foreign creditor. Either of them, if allowed, will suck the people dry. For the present moment the Khedive is muzzled; he is reduced to a fixed allowance, and may not lay on a fresh tax or receive any additional payments from the Treasury. Unhappily, his old place is taken by the bondholder and by the English and French Governments, which have constituted themselves his bailiffs. Nothing can save the country except to limit the demands of the bondholder, while at the same time keeping the Khedive under the tightest restrictions. To exact the letter of the bond in favour of the creditors means to starve the people in order

to send their wealth to England and France. To restore liberty of action to the Khedive means to starve the people in order to build fresh palaces and to keep the harem, the stable, and the barrack full. What is wanted is to treat the bondholders as the Khedive has been treated; they should receive some moderate compensation as from a bankrupt estate—say four per cent. on the present market value of the bonds—and then the taxes should be lowered and the country administered in the interests of the fellaheen. England and France are bound to see that this is done. They cannot escape the responsibility they have incurred towards this miserable people. They first permitted the ruinous indebtedness and then forbad the repudiation which was its natural and proper sequel. They were silent while the mischief was being done and spoke only to fix the burden on the wrong shoulders. This is injustice for which reparation is demanded at our hands."

This letter was written by one of the companions of my ride, and, as it shows by internal evidence, was not the result of any preconcerted arrangements with the other writers; it was published on the 9th April :—

"SIR,—Having been for some days in a remote part of Italy, I have been unable to see the *Times* until to-day, when I have read the letters addressed to you by Mr. Rivers Wilson and an Egyptian official. The former gentleman is evidently still quite unaware of the terrible state of things and of the extent of the evil which existed a few weeks since in Upper Egypt; and the latter, by telling half the truth, and half only, has, as he doubtless intended, conveyed a perfectly false impression to the minds of your readers. The immediate cause of the starvation of the inhabitants was indeed the failure of the dourha crop; but it

the people had not been utterly despoiled and ground to the earth by over-taxation, illegal exactions, and forced and unremunerative labour for the Khedive, they could have saved sufficient to tide over the evil time. As it is, they could not do so.

"Having lately returned from a land journey in Upper Egypt, I can testify that no words are strong enough to describe the utter misery of the fellaheen and the horror of the scenes I personally witnessed. I scarcely ever approached a village without hearing the shrill cries of the women over those who had died of starvation. Multitudes of the still living men, women, and children, were mere skeletons, and many were covered with sores, the too frequent result of starvation. In the town of How I saw two men, one old, the other in the prime of life, lying in the open street, and actually dying in that position for want of food. That and other shocking scenes took place within sight of one of the large sugar-factories, to which trains of camels were conveying the rich crops for the Khedive or his European creditors. I repeatedly saw people in the last stage of emaciation sitting in the paths and picking individual grains of dourha corn out of the dust. The wan, wolfish expression of the people's faces and their attenuated forms will haunt me for years. The fact is that the well-meant efforts of the two benevolent Scotch gentlemen who were picked up at Shepheard's Hotel and sent up to Luxor on the Nile in a Khedivial steamer were but a partial and feeble attempt to shut the stable door when the steed was stolen. Thousands had died of famine before they started from Cairo, and when they did start they did not visit at all the inland villages which lie back from the Nile. It would be interesting to the public if Mr. Rivers Wilson would condescend to publish a detailed account of the time these

gentlemen took in their Nile journey from Siout to Esneh, and a list of the places which they visited, and at which they established centres of relief. If this were done, the utter inadequacy of the means used to alleviate the distress would at once be apparent. The fact is that the system of government illustrated by the celebrated *mot* of the Khedive's, that 'he could not govern Egypt if he allowed the fellaheen to have more than one shirt on their backs apiece,' has borne its natural fruit.

"Allow me to add, in conclusion, that I can entirely confirm, from personal knowledge, the particulars as to the state of Upper Egypt given in the admirable letter of your correspondent from Erment—a letter the insertion of which will avail much in the cause of truth, justice, and humanity.

"I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

"G. I. C.

"VENICE, *April* 5."

Meanwhile, just before his fall, Mr. Wilson came to the rescue of the Egyptian Government. I have made short comments on his letter and that of Hamam, in the text, Both these letters appeared on the 2nd April:—

"THE FAMINE IN UPPER EGYPT.

"*To the Editor of the Times.*

"SIR,—A letter with the above heading, dated Cairo, Feb. 27, and signed 'W. J. L.,' appeared in the *Times* of March 13. As the writer seeks apparently to convey the impression that the Egyptian Government not only treated with indifference the distress existing in the upper provinces, but even discouraged the private efforts made to relieve it, I shall be glad if you will allow me to state the following facts:—

"Two months ago the Government despatched two Englishmen, in whom thorough confidence could be placed (one of them having spent many winters on the Nile and understanding Arabic), with *carte blanche* to take any steps that might be necessary for the immediate relief of the suffering population.

"These gentlemen, who have acquitted themselves of their task with excellent judgment and most successful results, did not report, as stated by 'W. J. L.,' that 'the accounts of the famine in Upper Egypt are greatly exaggerated.' The low Nile of 1877 caused a great failure of the crops in 1878. The poor have suffered much in the provinces of Girgeh, Keneh, and Esneh; many, especially old people and young children, have died in those districts, if not from actual starvation, at least from dysentery and other diseases brought on by insufficient or unwholesome food. Partly from the funds placed at the disposal of the two Englishmen who were good enough to act as agents of the Government, and partly from the funds raised by private subscriptions and applied by the local officials, many thousands of the population have been supported. In Girgeh, the only part of Upper Egypt where distress still remains, over 3,000 people are being fed daily, and will continue to be relieved until the end of the month, when the crops will be ripe. In Keneh the crops are now ripe and relief has been stopped. For the last three months nearly 5,000 people have been fed daily. In Esneh a large sum was collected among the wealthier class of the population, and was placed at the disposal of the Moudir for distribution.

"I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

"C. RIVERS WILSON.

"CAIRO, *March* 24."

"*To the Editor of the Times.*

"SIR,—I have seen to-day in the *Times* of the 13th a letter from Cairo, stating that a kind-hearted native gentleman (whose name the writer dared not mention) had been feeding 7,000 persons at Keneh. Had this been true, the officials there would have been only too glad, and he would have received every assistance from the Government. It is also mentioned by the writer of that letter 'that he is afraid of involving any of his informants in unpleasantness with the authorities.' As I occupy a high position in the province of Keneh (that of Chief Collector), I regret very much the misstatements in that letter. No such act of charity could have occurred at Keneh without our knowledge, and if any one had been disposed to be so generous it would have been our duty to have assisted him. Consequently, I am sorry to say that what has been stated about this feeding at Keneh is untrue.

"The facts are these:—In September, 1878, owing to the bad Nile, there was distress in the province. Daoud Pasha, the Moudir of Keneh, called together the following officials of the Government:—Ali Bey Elway, President of the Tribunal; the other members of the Tribunal; myself, Mohammed Effendi Ahmed (Deputy Moudir), Falastern Effendi (Chief of the Bureau of Investigation), the Chief Collectors of Districts, and other local officials. Besides these, the following Consuls:—Bisadah Abed, Hassan ben Om-Ezzain, Kiriakos Daud, Mustapha Effendi Yousef, as well as the chief merchants, Mahomedans and Christians. He then informed us that, in consequence of the low Nile of last year, some people were starving and that we must assist them, and we all agreed that it was our duty to do so. Every one of us contributed to this object; and others,

hearing what was being done, also subscribed. We collected T.52,000*l.* and 25 paras—that is to say, about 520 English pounds. The Moudir appointed a special committee to carry out this object. This committee purchased 379 ardebbs of corn and made it into bread, and fed daily about 5,200 people—viz., 1,000 males, 2,500 women, and 1,700 children. The distribution was made daily from the 17th of September, 1878, up to the 8th of November, 1878.

"On the 2nd November the committee received T.20,250*l.* —that is to say, about 200 English pounds—from Omer Pasha, then Inspector-General of Upper Egypt. With this money the committee purchased 128½ ardebbs of corn, made it into bread, and gave it to about 4,080 people, of whom 680 were men, 1,800 women, and 1,600 children. This distribution was made daily from the 8th of November to the 1st of December, 1878. How is it that, when all this assistance was given by Government officials and others, the writer of the letter in the *Times* insinuates that, should any one be known to have relieved the distressed, he would incur the disapprobation of the authorities? Therefore, I shall feel much obliged if you will publish this letter to show that the writer of the letter already referred to has been misinformed respecting Keneh.

"HAMAM HAMADI,

"*Chief Collector of the Province of Keneh.*

"CAIRO, *March* 22."

Finally in May the report of Mr. Baird was issued, and was as damaging to the Government of the Khedive as possible. The following account of it, a summary of all that had previously appeared, is abridged from the correspondence of the *Times*:—

"The deplorable accounts of suffering already published by the *Times* by no means exaggerated the state of the peasantry in the famine districts. The peasants, says Mr. Baird, whose intimate knowledge of Egypt makes the report exceptionally valuable, are without capital, steeped in poverty, and wholly dependent on the Nile both for their day to day sustenance and the unfailing demands of the tax-collector. The Nile in 1877 was so low that much arable land was left unwatered and consequently was not cultivated. This disaster was followed by an excessive Nile, which drowned the maize, the local food crop, and the peasants were left to beg, steal, or starve. The reason of the complete collapse before this temporary calamity is thus explained:—

"'Even in ordinary circumstances the Egyptian peasant leads a life which has little that is attractive to European eyes. His food consists of coarse maize bread, with beans, lentils, and onions, and various weeds. He wears scanty clothing of cotton or rough homespun woollen cloth, and sleeps in a mud hut or in the open air. . . . The worst feature in his life is his chronic state of indebtedness, either to the Government for arrears of taxation or to the merchant who supplies him on credit with seed-corn and corn for his household, to be repaid with exorbitant interest when his crops are ripe. The merchants for the most part are Europeans, and are always ready to make advances to the needy peasant, provided the interest is high enough; the fellah, called upon to pay his taxes at a moment when his crops are still unripe, is compelled to borrow, and is not in a position to wrangle about the interest. For instance, last year, when great pressure was put upon the Egyptian Government to pay the coupon due in May, the

peasants were forced to sell their growing crops, and in some cases, perfectly authenticated, corn was sold to the merchants for 50 piastres per ardebb, which was delivered in one month's time and then fetched 120 piastres. These are no exceptional cases; the same thing was going on over the whole of Upper Egypt. . . . At one place, where the market price of maize was 80 piastres, I found the peasants purchasing what they required for their household at 170 piastres on credit.' . . . .

"The famine was clearly caused by the complete absence of any reserve fund which the peasants could fall back upon. The usurer and tax-collector have brought the Egyptian fellah to a completely hand-to-mouth life. There was plenty of corn in the country: so much that Mr. Baird was able to buy it under market price; and yet during the months of September, October, November, and December, 1878, some 700,000 people were starving, and 10,000 literally died from starvation, while it is impossible to calculate the effects that are still to come from the long period of insufficient food. Bad as this is, it would have been still worse but for the energy of Mr. Baird and his colleague, Captain Harrison. They showed much discretion, too, in their manner of distributing relief. They gave no money, corn, or flour, only bread, so that only the genuine sufferers came to them; and yet in one province alone, not so big as an average English county, they fed 3,000 people daily. It is satisfactory, too, to learn that, once the local authorities became aware of the extreme need of the people, they did their best and cordially co-operated with Mr. Baird. But this cannot excuse their previous blindness.

"Mr. Baird draws the following conclusion from his

inquiry. They are important to those who seek to know Egypt's debt-paying powers :—'The famine was a money famine ; nobody who had money need starve. The agricultural population are extremely poor and over-taxed. Those who suffered most were women, children, old men, and professional beggars. The relief was sent some months too late. Owing to the good crops this year the famine is almost at an end. Unless something is done to release the people from their constant state of debt, another failure of the crops would produce equally deplorable results.' "

INDEX

INDEX.

A.

Abbas Pasha, his palace, his murder, 85, 86
Abood, or Abydos, 132, 140, 264
Abooteeg, 230
Ahmedieh dervishes, 115
Algciras, 15
Alphabet, the hieroglyphic, 139
Amen, worship of, 334—339
Amenemhat, 217
Anubis, 133
Ape's Hill, 21
Apis, 132
Arab politeness, 307
Arábat, 271—292
Arabian Night's entertainment, an, 347
Assa and his wife Athor-en-Kaoo, 133
Assouan, or Assooan (Syene), 172
Atet, tomb of, 207
Atlas, 14
Azhar, el, 185—187

B.

Babylon, or Babloon, 177
Backsheesh, 63
  at Gypt, 323
Bay of Biscay, storm in, 7
Bead hunting, 176
Bedreshayn, station at, 195
Beejapore, dome at, 50
Bekri, el, 114
Bellaseh, 355
Benhow, 240
Beni Hassan, 216
Berbeh, el, 271
Boat, the, on the Nile, 350—362
Boolak Museum, 125—142

C.

Cabin of a P. and O. steamer, 6
Cairo, costume of little boys, 3, 70
  English cemetery at, 177
  first impressions of, 69

Cairo, Old, or Fostat, 176
Calendars, 109—113
Camel, sheykh of the holy, 121
Camels, 317
Canal, Suez, 60, 64
Cemetery, English, at Cairo, 177
at Luxor, 353
Chatham, Earl of, 18
Chefra, or Shafra (Cephrenes), 129, 141
Chem, god of Chemmis, 323, 336, 337
Children on board, 11
Choobra, 99
Chronology, 265
Circassian, a pretty, 199
Cleopatra's Needle, 104, 106, 108
Companions of the ride, 196
Company on board a P. and O. steamer, 7
Coos or Goos, 311, 328—330
Coptic Calendar, 109—112
church at Luxor, 353
schools, 192
Coptos, 322—327
Copts, 69, 230—233, 236, 263, 322—327
Courier, inconveniences of a, 197
Cush, 4

D.

DAKKEH, in Nubia, 173
Dendera, 278, 310—316
Dervish, a, at Suez, 65
Dervishes, 113—115
Dingli, Sir Adrian, 43
Dogberry at Messina, 56
Domes, list of largest, 49
Donkeys, 250—259, 327
Doseh, the, 117

E.

EDFOO, granite shrine at, 277
Elliot, Lord Heathfield, 15, 20
Etna, 55

F.

FALCONS, 275, 306
Famine, first signs of, 241
the, 292, 294—302, 357—359
Fellah, his tastes, 89
the, his agriculture, 86—99
women, 91
Forts at Abood, 285
Ramleh, El Kab, Dakkeh, &c., compared, 170—175
French in Egypt, 283, 289
Funeral at Luxor, 350—354

G.

GEESE pasturing, early picture of, 208
Geseeret e' Shendoweel, 360
Gheezeh, cairns at, 3
pyramids of, 148—161
Gibraltar, 14
antiquities at, 16
castle of, 17, 19
sieges of, 15
Girgeh, 259
Girls, pretty, 201
Girls' schools, 193
Greeks in Egypt, 216, 235, 250
Gypt, 322—327

H.

HASSAN, BENI, 216
Sultan, his mosque, 82
Hatasoo, Queen, 175, 340
Hawks in sculpture, 274
Heliopolis, 84, 101—108
Hi, a sculptor, 274
Hindoo officers, 12
Horus, and St. George, 280
worship of, 277
Hosy, wood carvings from tomb of, 134
How, shocking scenes at, 296
Howara Arabs, 228—230
Hymn to Amen Ra, 339

I.

INQUISITION at Malta, 35
Irishman, the, on board, 9
Ismail Pasha, 72—83

J.

JUDAH MEREK, name on walls of Karnac, 348

K.

KAB, EL, 173
Kam, or Kham, land of, 324
Karnac, first views of, 331
obelisk at, 106, 340—341
pillars at, 218, 339
Keneh, 319—322
Khedive, his apologists, 73, 77
his palaces, 74
Ismail, his policy, 72
the name, 3
Kisweh, 116
Kom e' Sultan, 285

L.

LEAVING London, 2
London, Romans in, 180
Luxor, 341—354

M.

MAHMAL procession, 117
Malta, 23
French, in, 35
history of, 34
nobles of, 43
parliament of, 36
postal arrangements, 51
quarantine at, 24, &c.
St. Paul's Bay, 25, 29
Manetho, present importance of, 126, 265
Marashteh, 303
Mariette, his views on Egyptian history, 126, 265
Mataarieh, 101
Maydoom, 139, 156, 157, 201—216
Mecca pilgrimage, 116
Medinet-Aboo, 343
Menes, reign of, 128, 140
Menkaoora (Mycerinus), 159
Messina, 56—59
Michaela, 360
Michell, Mr. Roland, his work on Egyptian Calendars, 109
Miriam, Sitt, or St. Mary, 179
Mohammed or Mehemet, Ali, 172
Mohammed Towfik, 99, 193
Mohammed's descendants, 114
Moia, water, 201
Mosque of Mohammed Ali and Sultan Hassan, 82, 173
Mosta, dome of, 49
Moulid e'Nebi, 113
Museum, Boolak, 125—142
Music, Arab, 89, 345—347
Muslim calendars, 109, 112

N.

NEFERT, statue and tomb of, 201, 211
statue of, 130, 131
Nefermat, tomb of, 205
Nicopolis, 170—172

O.

OBELISKS, 101—108
On, 84, 101—108
On board the P. and O., 4
Oona, tablet of, 266, 267.
Orange tree at Gibraltar, 17
Osman Bey, Sultan, 271

P.

P. AND O. STEAMERS, 4
Paul, St., 25, 29
Paul's, St., 49
Persians in Egypt, 177
Peter, St., 177
Peter's, St., 49
Poets, Arab, 344
Poont, or Pount, 336
Port Said, 60
Prophet, the, on the platform, 65
Pyramids, 148—161
  cost of, 160
  heights of, 157
  inscriptions on, 158
  list of, 155
  object of, 157—160.

Q.

QUARANTINE at Malta, 24—34

R.

RA-HOTEP and Nefert, statues, 130, 131
Railways in Egypt, 62, 64
Rameses II., 281, 282
Ramleh, 171
"Rufus," account of William, 257

S.

SADYK PASHA, his crimes and punishment, 80, 297
Sakkara, 132, 135
Saladin, Joseph, 172
Saleh, 116
Scarabs, 144—147
  forged, 146
Schools, Coptic and other Christian, 192
  for girls, 193
  in Cairo, 182—184, 187, 192, 193
Schools in the country, 189
  supported by Towfik Pasha, 193
Scylla and Charybdis, 57—59
Semaineh, 302
Seneferoo, King, 131, 205
Senta, King, 135
Seti I., art under, 281
Shama, or Shemma, Kasr e', 175
Shegeret e' Door, 116
Shenhoor, temple of Tiberius at, 331
Shery, tomb of, 135
Sheykh el Beled, office of, 299
Shoofoo (Cheops), 132, 134, 165
Sioot, 220, 232, 361
  camp at, 223, 227
Slavery, 79, 199
Sokar-ka-baoo, tomb of, 135
Soohag, 235—253
Sphinx, 161—169
  beard of, 162
  primeval situation of, 167
  tablet of, 163
Ssoot, tombs at, 224
Suez, 60
Sultan Hassan's mosque, 82

T.

TABLE of Abood, 140
Taric ibn Zeyad, 17
Taxes, 300
Temneh, 233
This, 271—292
Thothmes IV. and the Sphinx, 163—166
Thy, 141, 282, 349
Tiberius, temple of, 331
Trafalgar, 14

V.

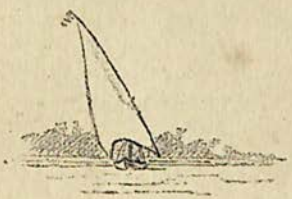
VALETTA, 29, 30
  harbour, 52
  palace at, 38
Vincent, Cape St., 14
Virgin's Tree, the, 121

W.

WALTON'S Despatch, 57
Wasta station, wretched afternoon at, 215
Whateley, Miss, school at Cairo, 184
William Rufus, character of, 257—259
Windhover, or kestrel, identified with Horus, 274—280
Women, Arab, 228
Women and children in Cairo, 118
Women under the ancient monarchy, 137
Women's hands impressed on bricks, 175
Wuthering Heights, quoted, 168

Z.

ZEYNAB (Zenobia), the prophet's granddaughter, 175
Zikrs, 115



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